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Martyrs of Bohemia

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PREFACE.

THE following pages depict great men—nature's noblemen—living and acting amid stirring scenes, and the conflict of great principles. They do more—they show "that great ideas do not perish with human bodies in the ashes of the stake."

In the histories of men like Huss and Jerome, we learn the *value* of free principles by their *cost;* we have a view of the terrific struggle through which liberty of conscience has arisen to its present elevated position. We are also taught the importance of guarding a treasure priceless in value, and purchased with blood.

The information contained in this small volume is of precisely the kind which the enlightened statesman and patriot, as well as the Christian, desires to see universally diffused: for what can be more important to a free people than the history of freedom? We honor the men who die, that the hands of a nation may wear no chains, and their feet no fetters. Shall we not honor the men who die that the SOUL may be free? The name of Leonidas is a household word, because Leonidas died for Greece. Huss was a martyr, not for political

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freedom, but for conscience. Huss died not for Greece, but for the human race.

The memoirs of such men should be in every family in our land; they should be read by parent and child; and wherever even the pioneer rears his first rude hut, the names of "THE MARTYRS OF BOHEMIA," with those of WICLIF and LUTHER, should be as familiar as the name of WASHINGTON.

This is a small volume—it also aspires to the honor of being a sabbath-school book. On both these accounts, the compiler indulges the hope that it will find its way where larger volumes would not, and be read by thousands with both pleasure and profit.

It is but justice to add, that for the materials of the work here presented to the reader, the compiler has been chiefly indebted to "The Reformers before the Reformation," by Bonechose. The course of this author's narrative has been followed, and his language, to a considerable extent, adopted. The following works have been consulted, and have, to some extent, contributed their aid:—"The Encyclopedia Americana;" "A Life of John Huss, translated from the German;" and "Murray's Encyclopedia of Geography."

D. SMITH.

Tarrytown, Jan. 12, 1846.

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MARTYRS OF BOHEMIA.

CHAPTER I.

Bohemia—Birth and early life of John Huss—Goes to the university of Prague—Singular incident.

NEAR the centre of Europe is a country to which nature and history have combined to give celebrity. It consists of an extensive plain, completely inclosed by lofty mountains. These mountains rise from three to five thousand feet. Inclosed within their lofty ranges is one of the most picturesque and beautiful countries in Europe. The great stream of the Elbe rises here, and rolls through the entire plain, receiving its fine tributary the Moldau, with various smaller streams. There is, perhaps, no country upon earth more rich in solid and useful productions—grain, cattle, timber, and metals abound. The scenery is diversified with groves, cultivated fields, and fine streams, which issue from small lakes, said to amount to twenty thousand in number. This country is

Bohemia: Prague, its renowned capital, is situated in the very centre of the great plain. Its bridge over the Moldau; its old Gothic cathedral, on a hill; the vast decaying palaces of its ancient nobles, and the old style of architecture in the private mansions, unite to give it an air of antique grandeur. Prague has, at the present time, one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants. Its ancient university, which formerly could boast of nearly twenty thousand students, has still forty-four professors, and about nine hundred students.

Bohemia has not been less distinguished for its fertile plains, and the beauty of its scenery, than for the noble and free spirit of its inhabitants. When the valleys of the Rhone and Piedmont were crimsoned with the blood of the Waldenses, Bohemia opened her arms to receive the bleeding fugitives. The father, who had seen his house in flames; his fields trampled down by hordes of Christian savages; his wife lie bleeding before his eyes, here found hands and hearts open to receive him. Here the remains of broken and shattered families assembled to tell the story of their wrongs, and here they brought that divine truth and pure worship for which they had suffered the loss of all things. Thus, in opening their arms to

receive these persecuted people, the Bohemians received the light of the gospel, which, though it shone only in a few places, and from lowly cottages, yet aided in preparing the way of the Lord.

The revival of learning was at the same time in progress. After a long night of centuries, the human intellect was waking. It found itself degraded and enchained. While it had slumbered, it had been bound hand and foot with the chains of a corrupt, superstitious, and soulless religion. Indignant at this vile treatment, it was beginning in good earnest to break its fetters. Prague, at the period of which we are speaking, was becoming a focus of intellectual light.

There was another circumstance favorable to Bohemia. The royal house had intermarried with that of England. This brought the two countries into frequent intercourse. From the land of Wiclif, the sentiments of Wiclif found their way into Bohemia. Thus the light began to shine, and, reaching the corruptions of an apostate church, prepared Bohemia to receive the gospel.

Such was the condition of this country in the latter part of the fourteenth century. About this period JOHN HUSS came upon the stage; a

man whose life was at once a picture of interest and an immortal example. He was born in 1373, at Hussinetz, a small market town in the district of Bechin. History furnishes but few details concerning the early life of Huss, or the character of his parents. This is matter of sincere regret. Nothing is more pleasing or instructive than to follow a distinguished man to the home of his childhood—to inquire, Who were his parents? what was their grade of intellect? what their education—their religious views and habits? and what the sentiments they inculcated? Generally, where we are able to do this, we find in the child all the elements of character which afterward distinguish the man.

The parents of Huss were poor and honest peasants. Yet they valued learning, and spared no pains for his education. Doubtless, imagination depicted a happy future, when the promising son should reflect honor upon his delighted parents; but little did they think their cares were lavished to ornament a victim, and prepare him for the sacrifice. He acquired the rudiments of knowledge at a village near the place of his birth. Obtaining the countenance and assistance of Nicholas, a feudal lord of his own native village, his mother, now a widow,

conducted him to Prague, where he took his degrees in the university.

A little circumstance, trivial in itself, is yet worthy of record, as it depicts in a simple manner the artless and touching character of this estimable woman. She had taken, for a present to the rector of the university, a cake and a goose. The goose escaped on the way. This appeared to this excellent mother so disastrous an omen, that, falling on her knees, she prayed to God to pour a blessing on her dear boy's head, and then pursued her journey.

It has been said by one of Huss's biographers, that "neither birth, education, nor manner of life, had prepared this mild, modest, and somewhat timid man, for the true light of the gospel." This needs proof. The presumption is the other way. We know that he early manifested a fervent piety, and a high regard for truth and justice. Reading near the fire, one evening, the Life of St. Laurence, his imagination glowed at the recital of the martyr's sufferings, and he placed his hand in the flames. A fellow-student prevented him from holding it there, and he exclaimed, "I was endeavoring to ascertain what part of the torments of this holy man I should be able to endure." Such a spirit, in a mere youth, commends his educa-

tion. The parents of Huss could have been no ordinary persons. Though, doubtless, their knowledge of the gospel was defective, yet we are inclined to believe they had given their son an education well calculated to "prepare him for receiving the true light," which afterward shone upon him.

CHAPTER II.

Preferment of Huss—His pious horror at reading the bold opinions of Wiclif—Becomes a convert to some of Wiclif's opinions.

Huss lived in a stormy period. Europe had long groaned under the tyranny of iron-handed despotism in church and state. The priest and the noble had united to fetter the free spirit. Abuses, hoary with age, and venerable for their antiquity, demanded the submission, and even the homage, of the abused. But in most places there were some who felt the galling of their chains, and were resolved to assert their liberty. Thus a fierce struggle commenced, and every city and village became an arena for combat. John Huss was destined by divine Providence to become a leader in this great conflict. In many respects he was eminently fitted for the

work assigned him. He was mild and modest; he had an easy and persuasive address; his morals were pure, and his sincerity undoubted. "John Huss," says the Jesuit Balbinus, who was not his friend, "was more subtil than eloquent; but the modesty and severity of his manners, his austere and irreproachable life, his pale and melancholy face, his great mildness, and his affability to all, even the most humble, were more persuasive than the greatest eloquence. The stupid people hold him as a saint, and think he can neither deceive nor be deceived."

Huss made rapid progress in his studies; and, entering the ministry, became equally eminent in the church and in the university. John Mulheim, a person of large fortune in Prague, erected a chapel, which he called Bethlehem; and having amply endowed it, he appointed Huss as minister. He also became confessor to Queen Sophia, second wife of King Wenceslaus. By her favor he obtained many powerful friends at court; and, having risen from one post to another, was ultimately appointed rector of the university. His celebrity, however, was not due to the patronage of courts, or his attainments in science.

A young gentleman, recently returned from

a voyage to England, had brought with him the Works of Wiclif. He showed them to Huss, who was alarmed at the boldness with which that great man assailed the corruptions of the church, and begged him to burn them, or throw them into the Moldau. But his eyes soon began to open: he studied the word of God, and the more he saw of its holy doctrines, the more did he see the unholiness of the church. In the Gospels he heard Christ declaring, "My kingdom is not of this world;" in the church he heard the pope, his pretended representative, claiming dominion, spiritual and temporal, over the whole world. In the Gospels he heard Christ saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;" in the church, he saw the pope in a magnificent palace, wearing a temporal crown—the bishops and clergy, the holders of immense estates, rioting and feasting, and shedding blood at the head of hostile armies. In the Gospels he heard the accents of mercy—Jesus breathing a prayer to Heaven for his murderers; in the church he heard a hoarse cry for vengeance and blood against all who opposed its authority, or questioned its infallibility. In addition to these crying corruptions, the church, which so loudly

proclaimed herself one, indivisible, and infallible, had lost even the shadow of external unity. She had, for many years, been distracted by two rival popes, who cherished toward each other the most deadly enmity, and who loaded each other with curses. But now (1409) the council of Pisa, convened for the reformation of the church and the extinction of schism, gave, as the results of its labors, a *third* pope. This climax of abuse and absurdity opened many eyes. Where was the boasted unity of a church with three heads? Where was her infallibility when these infallible heads were cursing and excommunicating each other? These things made a deep and painful impression on the mind of Huss, which followed him even in his sleep.

In proportion as the schism was prolonged, he studied the more seriously the writings of Wiclif. His prejudices gave way; and he thought and spoke of the great reformer with decided approbation. Some of his fellow-collegians, one day, found him reading Wiclif, and reproachfully remarked, that, by a decree of the council, that author had been sent to hell. He replied, "I only wish that my soul, when it leaves this body, may reach the place where that of this excellent Briton now dwells."

Huss now became a conspicuous character.

True, he presented himself neither as an innovator nor the head of a sect; he claimed neither submission nor admiration: he simply drew his strength from the divine word, which he preached with untiring diligence in the chapel of Bethlehem. But this holy word had been so long veiled and distorted by the priests, that it seemed to his hearers as though they now heard it for the first time. Students and citizens, nobility and the court, crowded to hear this favorite of the people. The name of Huss became familiar to all, and all eyes were turned upon the bold champion of religious truth.

CHAPTER III.

A contest in the university—Huss and the archbishop—Writings of Wiclif and Huss burned—Huss appeals to the university of Bologna—Boldness in the pulpit.

It is said of Abraham when called of God to leave his country, that "he went forth, not knowing whither he went." So it has been with most of those persons whom God has employed in eminent services. They became conspicuous against their will, and altogether contrary to their own expectations. This was eminently the case with Huss. Though a man

of peace, he was also a man of conscience; though mild, he was courageous. He allied himself with truth and duty, and this brought him into successive conflicts with error and sin.

We have already named his election to the rectorship of the university. He rose to that post in the midst of a storm. The university had been founded on the model of the universities of Paris and Bologna, and its management was divided between Bohemia, Bavaria, Poland, and Saxony. The last three countries were comprised under the general name of the German nations. Originally three votes were given to Bohemia, and only one to the other three nations united: but in course of time the Germans had usurped the three votes, leaving but one to Bohemia. John Huss, in the name of his countrymen, protested against this usurpation. He pleaded their cause with great ardor, and gained it. Incensed at the loss of their suit and pretended privileges, the Germans abandoned Prague and scattered themselves among the other universities of the continent. Bohemia and her capital suffered much from this desertion, but it spread Wiclif's doctrines through Germany, and, at a later period, materially served the cause of the Reformation.

John Huss, whose zeal for the privileges of his nation had made him a host of new enemies, was then appointed rector of the university. Thus, in elevating him in dignity, divine Providence invested his word with fresh authority, and exhibited, in a stronger light, his eminent piety.

About the same time he had a contest with Sbinko, the archbishop of Prague. This man, of little learning, but great zeal for the privileges of the church, was the creature of Gregory XII. Huss, though declaiming against the wickedness of the popes, but still respecting their authority, believed Gregory to be a usurper. He had therefore exhorted the people to unite with the cardinals in deposing him. For this the archbishop attempted to suspend him. A new pope, however, succeeded, and Huss and the archbishop were at peace again. But this peace was of short duration. Huss had committed too many offenses to be forgiven. It was evident his opposition to the corruptions of the church was not the result of a transient excitement. His preaching too was producing effect. Mass and penance money were falling off—pious gifts did not come in as formerly. Huss was denounced as a disturber of the peace, a mover of sedition, a pestilent fellow. The priests assailed the royal palace with petitions

against him. But Wenceslaus had little attachment to Rome: he had been deposed from his office as emperor of Germany, and the pope had confirmed his deposition; he had also a real respect for Huss. The petitioners received no favor, but were dismissed with these words:—"You shall leave my goose* in peace who lays me golden eggs."

But Huss was not to be left at peace. On the 20th of December, 1409, Alexander V. published a bull against his doctrines, though without particularly naming him. By this bull, preaching in private chapels was forbidden, as also to teach Wiclif's doctrines in any place. The archbishop was called upon to proceed against all offenders as heretics; he was to suppress Wiclif's books by every means in his power, and to call to his aid the secular authorities. To this Huss replied:—"I appeal from Alexander ill informed, to Alexander better informed."

The archbishop, however, acted in obedience to the orders thus given, particularly as in doing so he followed his personal inclination.

The previous year he had commanded all who possessed the writings of Wiclif to bring them to the episcopal palace. The mandate

* Huss, in the Bohemian dialect, means a "goose."

had been obeyed even by many members of the university. A large collection, not only of the writings of Wiclif, but of Huss and other reformers, had been made. Such was liberty in those days. Altogether there were more than two hundred volumes, carefully written, and splendidly bound. Books were valuable then, for the art of printing was unknown. Imboldened by the pontiff's bull, Sbinko caused the episcopal palace to be barricaded, and surrounded with soldiers, and these valuable books were committed to the flames. A cry of indignation ran through Bohemia; public opinion and taste were at once outraged; even the priests, but especially the nobility, protested against this vandalism. The queen wept, and Wenceslaus cursed aloud.

The following Sunday, Huss ascended the pulpit and commented on the conduct of his adversaries. "Fire," said he, "does not consume truth. It is always the mark of a little mind to vent anger on inanimate objects. The books which are burned are a loss to the whole nation." Huss then entered a protest against the conduct of the archbishop, and the question was submitted to the university of Bologna.

The archbishop, however, went further: he summoned Huss to appear before his tribunal,

and answer for his doctrine. Huss obeyed; and Sbinko, among other things, charged him with having denied the virtue of sepulture in consecrated ground. "You have asserted," said he, "that the mortal remains of the dead could rest in fields and forests just as well as in consecrated ground; and yet, my dear son, you cannot be ignorant how many plagues formerly smote Bohemia on account of profane burials." "If," replied Huss, "anything has fallen from me, through error or forgetfulness, against the Christian faith, I shall amend it." The archbishop dared not proceed further, and dismissed Huss, who, on the ensuing Sunday, ascended the pulpit, and said:—"It is a strange thing, my dear Bohemians, that a prohibition to teach manifest truths has been issued. Those private burials, those tapers and bells, are of no other use than to fill the purses of covetous priests; and what they call order, is nothing else but confusion: believe me, they want to enchain you by such commands, but you shall burst their bonds."

The university of Bologna gave judgment against the violent proceedings of the archbishop. Huss then appealed to the pope, who turned the affair over to Cardinal Colonna, before whom Huss was ordered to appear at Bologna.

CHAPTER IV.

John XXIII.—Huss summoned to Bologna—Excommunicated—Prague laid under an interdict—Huss retires to his native village.

Huss was now about to enter the lists with a terrific enemy. Alexander V., to whom Huss had appealed, died in the beginning of the year 1410; he had been allured to Bologna, by Balthassar Cossa, his legate in that city, where he died suddenly and unexpectedly. Cossa, who was suspected of being the cause of his death, succeeded him in the Papal chair under the title of John XXIII. It would be difficult to mention a crime of which this pope has not been accused, and of which he has not also confessed himself guilty. Thiery Niem, his secretary and biographer, represents him as a monster of avarice, ambition, lewdness, and cruelty; he upbraids him in the most bitter terms with his simoniacal election. "You did not enter by the door," he observes, "but by the window. Of you has it been asserted, with justice, that you broke through the threshold with a golden ax; and you silenced the watch dogs by cramming them with food, that they might not bark at you."

Every *true* minister of Jesus Christ was looked upon by John XXIII. as his mortal enemy. The friends of John Huss had no desire that he should venture into the den of this lion. When, therefore, he summoned him to appear at his court, before Cardinal Colonna, the king, the queen, the university, and a great number of the principal barons of Bohemia and Moravia, sent, conjointly, an embassy to the pope to request him to dispense with John Huss's making the journey in person, but to receive legal counsel; they added, that if he suspected that heresy was tolerated in Bohemia, he was at liberty to send legates, at the king's expense, to investigate the matter. Even the archbishop wrote that he and Huss were reconciled, and that no heresy existed in Bohemia. Three proxies appeared for Huss: they made excuse for Huss's absence, and said they were ready to answer in his behalf. But the cardinal, enraged at finding his intended victim still out of his reach, declared him contumacious, and excommunicated him. On this the proxies appealed to the pope, who appointed four cardinals to examine the process. The proxies were refused a hearing and treated with great indignity, and the sentence of excommunication was confirmed. It was also extended to all his followers. The city

of Prague was laid under an interdict. So long as Huss remained there, a prohibition was laid upon the celebration of mass, of baptism, and the interment of the dead. This sentence threw the city into the wildest commotion, and was the cause of sedition and massacre.

John Huss's character now shone forth in its true light: he enjoyed the protection of the court; the people were on his side, the indignation against the clergy was at its height, and he saw himself oppressed and borne down by a man who was an object of almost universal contempt. Yet was he so devoid of personal ambition, as to refuse to profit by so many advantages. He would not irrevokably break with an authority which he still respected even while he attacked it. His mind, indeed, was but half enlightened. He still thought the pope the successor of St. Peter, although bearing every mark of antichrist. He wrote to the cardinals in submissive terms, protesting his innocence, and declaring he would willingly attest it by suffering martyrdom, if necessary, and concluded by praying God to enlighten the pontiff who persecuted him.

What an authority had Rome usurped over the minds of men in those days! Reason and common sense were crushed. This Christian,

so ardent and strong, when thun[illegible] against the abuses and scandals of the chur[illegible] a child when called to substitute hi[illegible] the authority of his oppressors; bu[illegible] in vain he appealed to men, he ma[illegible] to God. "Our Lord Jesus Chris[illegible] "real God and real man, when encon[illegible] pontiffs, scribes, Pharisees, and priests, his judges and accusers, gave his disciple admirable example of submitting their caus[illegible] the omniscient and omnipotent God. In pursuance of his example, I now appeal to God. Seeing myself oppressed by an unjust sentence, and by the pretended excommunication of the pontiffs, scribes, Pharisees, and judges, seated in the chair of Moses—I, John Huss, present this my appeal to Jesus Christ, my Master and my Judge, who knows and protects the just cause of the humblest of men."

But beset with enemies, perils, and difficulties, he still hesitated. "Feeling," said he, "the love of the heavenly word, and the zeal to disseminate it, my soul is sad, and I know not what to do. I have meditated on this word of our Saviour, 'The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep: but he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, seeing the wolf coming, leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf scattereth

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course. Bidding adieu
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to his disciples, to ex-
aving Prague. "Learn,
at if I have withdrawn
it is to follow the precept
Christ, in order not to
minded to draw on them-
selves eternal condemnation; and in order not to be the innocent cause of persecution to you. I have retired, also, through an apprehension that impious priests might continue, for a longer time, to prohibit the preaching of the word of God among you. But I have not quitted you to deny the truth, for which, with God's assistance, I am willing to die."

Huss, during his retirement, employed himself in preaching and writing. Though excommunicated by an authority which education and habit taught him to respect, he could not be silent. Indeed, his mind at this period was in a constant conflict. He respected the Roman

Church, and declared his unwillingness to separate from it; and yet, unknown to himself, he was carrying out principles which shook its very foundations. He was vainly striving to be a good member of a church which proclaimed herself *immutable* and *infallible*, and yet asserting his right to examine her decrees before he submitted to them. Thus he carried in his bosom opposing principles, which kept up a violent and interminable struggle. He followed the dictates of conscience, as enlightened by the Scriptures; but it cost him a continuous conflict.

The striking contrast between the lives of so many popes, cardinals, and priests, and the example of Christ and his apostles, was a source of poignant sorrow to Huss. The indignation which he felt armed him with words which were drawn swords. He manifested at times the inconsiderate zeal of a sectary rather than the cool moderation of an apostle: but soon his mind resumed its wonted serenity. Whenever he was called to point out the way of salvation to others, or strengthen himself in it, he recovered a power of expression truly evangelical. Then it was that he poured out, from his full heart, glowing expressions of piety, charity, and self-devotedness for God and man,

as from an ardent and inexhaustible furnace of faith and love.

Several of his letters, written at this time, manifest a vague presentiment of martyrdom. Writing to the new rector of the university, he says,—"I know well that if I persevere in what is just, no evil, whatever it may be, will be able to turn me from the paths of truth. If I desire to live piously in Christ, it is necessary for me to suffer in his name. What are the riches of the age? What the indignities, which, endured with humility, prove, purify, and illuminate the children of God? What, in fact, is death, if I am torn from this wretched existence? He who loses his life here below, triumphs over death itself, and finds real life. As for me, I have no desire to live in this corrupt age. I shall, I trust, affront death itself, if the mercy of the Lord comes to my aid." He then goes on to draw a fearful picture of the licentiousness of the clergy, in which body he, for the moment at least, sees the antichrist of the Scriptures. Then giving vent to his grief, he exclaims,—"Wo to me if I preach not, if I write not, if I weep not, on account of such abominations! Already the great eagle (Rev. viii, 13) takes its flight, and cries, 'Wo! wo! to the inhabitants of the earth!'"

Again, in one of his admirable letters, he says,—"Beloved, do not allow yourselves to be cast down by terror if the Lord should try some among you. God himself has said to his servant, 'Be not afraid when the power of the wicked shall fall on thee, for I shall be on thy side.' And he has declared, 'I will be with him in trial, I will deliver him, I will glorify him.' The Creator, the King, the sovereign Master of the world, voluntarily humbled himself, and took upon him our nature. He came to aid us miserable sinners. He suffered hunger, thirst, cold, heat, watching, and fatigue, when giving us his divine instructions: he suffered weighty sorrows, and grave insults from the priests and scribes. They called him a blasphemer, and declared he had a devil, asserting that he whom they had excommunicated as a heretic, driven from their city, and crucified as an accursed one, could not be God. If, then, Christ had to support such things—he who cured all sorts of diseases—drove out devils—raised the dead—and taught God's holy word—who did no harm to any one—if he suffered such indignities from the priests, simply because he laid open their wickedness, why should we be astonished that the ministers of antichrist, in our day, who are far more covetous, more de-

bauched, more cruel, and more cunning than the Pharisees, should persecute the servants of God—overwhelm them with indignity, curse, excommunicate, imprison, and kill them? The chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, Herod, and Pilate, thought they could put down the truth. They condemned it, crucified it, buried it; but, rising from the tomb, it was victor over them all."

CHAPTER V.

Huss returns to Prague—Flight of Sbinko—The Holy Scriptures—The new archbishop—The pope's bulls—Huss opposes them—Public discussion—Huss triumphant.

THE retirement of John Huss had not calmed down the public mind in Prague, and the natural result followed. The persecution, which failed to smother the new doctrine in the cradle, gave it wings and strength. The half-enlightened multitude recalled their preacher with furious cries. Blood flowed. The people struggled against their oppressors—the priests were insulted, and in the utmost peril. Sbinko, whose violent proceedings had been among the chief causes of the excitement, saw himself without power, and exposed between a besotted monarch (such was Wenceslaus) and an exas-

perated populace. He fled to Hungary, to implore aid of the new emperor, Sigismund. But the emperor was engaged in a furious war with the Turks, and could not come to the aid of the priests, however much he might have desired it. The departure of Sbinko was looked upon by Huss's partisans as a triumph: but fresh troubles arose even from this quarter. A sinister report got into circulation, that the archbishop had died on the road from the effects of poison. The Hussites were accused, though wrongfully, of his death.* The suspicion, however, was industriously spread; and the event, which delivered the Reformation of one enemy, raised up others not less inveterate, and rendered the animosity of all more ardent and implacable.

Huss, though excommunicated, now resumed his labors at Prague. He was conscious of his own uprightness, and he saw more clearly than ever the iniquity that reigned at Rome. To the Scriptures, therefore, he fled as his guide and refuge. A passage from his own pen shows clearly by what path he was led. Referring to Ezekiel viii, 8, 9, "And when I had

* Jean Cochlée, the historian least favorable to Huss and his partisans, exonerates them from all connection with the death of the archbishop.

digged in the wall, behold a door. And the Lord said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here," he exclaims, "I also have been raised up to dig in the wall, in order that the multiplied abominations of the holy place may be laid open. It has pleased the Lord to draw me forth from the place where I was, like a brand from the burning. Unhappy slave of my passions, as I was, it was necessary that God himself should rescue me, like Lot, from the burning of Sodom: and I have obeyed the voice that said to me, Dig in the wall. . . . I next beheld a door; and *that door was the Holy Scriptures*, through which I contemplated the abominations of the monks and priests, laid open before me, and represented under divers emblems. Never did the Jews and pagans commit such horrible sins in the presence of Jesus Christ, as those bad Christians and hypocritical priests commit every day in the church."

Huss appears, notwithstanding his excommunication, to have enjoyed a short period of repose. Albicus, formerly private surgeon to Wenceslaus, had been elected archbishop. "His election," says a Romanist historian, "was simoniacal; and no man carried sordid avarice further than he. He lived most parsimonious-

ly, not that he might have the more to give to the poor, but to fill his coffers. The most insupportable noise to his ears, he used to say, was that made at table by teeth gnawing bones; and the harsh sound of a saw was less disagreeable to him than the continued noise of horses when eating at a manger." Such was the character of the successor of Sbinko; and it is not surprising that he should be more occupied with his private affairs than with those of the church. But the brief calm which Huss enjoyed was no more than the stillness which precedes the storm, and the storm was soon aroused.

Italy was at this time torn asunder by the struggle between two pretenders to the throne of Naples, Louis II., of Anjou, and Ladislaus, of Hungary. Louis was supported in his pretensions by John XXIII., while Gregory XII. took the side of his rival. Ladislaus had already, when at one time master of Rome, given it up to the wild excesses of the soldiery. He openly declared Pope John to be guilty of murder and sacrilege, and announced his determination of exterminating him. John, on his part, burned for vengeance against this, his most formidable enemy.

At length, on the 9th of September, 1411, he proclaimed a crusade against Ladislaus

through all Christendom. He declared, in his bull, commanding this crusade, that Ladislaus "was excommunicated, perjured, a schismatic, a blasphemer, a relapsed heretic, and a supporter of heretics—the enemy of the pope and of the church. And he enjoined, under pain of excommunication, all patriarchs, archbishops, and prelates, to declare, on Sundays and fast-days, with bells ringing, and tapers burning, and then suddenly extinguished, and thrown upon the ground, this sentence against him. In the same way he excommunicated his children, to the third generation, including also his adherents and well-wishers. He commanded that, if they died, they should be deprived of Christian burial; and that whoever should afford burial to Ladislaus and his partisans should be excommunicated, and should not be absolved until he had disinterred their bodies with his own hands. He prayed all emperors, kings, princes, cardinals, and believers of both sexes, to save the church, by persecuting without mercy Ladislaus and all his defenders. Those who entered on this crusade were to have the same indulgences as those proceeding to the conquest of the Holy Land."

A second bull was issued at the same time against Gregory XII., one of the rival popes.

In this, his brother pope is pronounced, "the son of malediction, a heretic, and a schismatic." It promised "*complete remission of sins* to all persons who should preach up the crusade, and collect funds for the cause."

To his well-beloved Bohemians, Pope John sent a special bull, to this effect: "Eternal salvation, and absolution from sin might be obtained in exchange for their silver and gold, or even for their iron weapons used in his support." Huss viewed this demand not only in a religious, but in a patriotic light. Was the blood of his countrymen to be shed in a mere personal quarrel? Was the revenue of a small and impoverished people to be squandered on such an enterprise? Above all, was this the language of the representative of Jesus Christ in the church? While his mind was filled with these musings, he was summoned, by the new archbishop and the pope's legates, to answer on the subject of the bulls. "Will you obey the bull of the pope, and preach the crusade?" demanded the legates. Huss replied, "I have nothing more at heart than to obey the apostolic commands." The legates, who knew no difference between the commands of the pope and those of the apostles, turned to Albicus, and said, "You hear, my lord archbishop, he is will-

ing to obey the apostolic commands." But Huss, determined to leave no doubt of his meaning, boldly replied, that were he to be burned, he would obey the orders of the pope no further than they were conformed to those of the apostles. This declaration broke up the interview. Huss then openly attacked the pope's bull. He showed that the whole matter was but a quarrel between the pope and the king of Naples; and that forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation were to be sought, not by the profane and useless payment of Peter-pence, as specified in the pope's bull, but by such a course as is enjoined in the word of God. Nor did he content himself with attacking the pope's bull merely: he animadverted upon his pretended power of granting indulgences to those who should engage in the pious work of butchering all who dare oppose his mad ambition. Referring to Augustine and Gregory, he says,—"When those two great saints have not dared to promise remission of sins, even to those who have done penance, with what countenance can Pope John, in his bull, promise *the most entire remission of sins* and *eternal salvation to his accomplices?*" "It is not," says he, "contrary to the faith, that many popes, who have granted ample indul-

gences, are damned. Of what value, therefore, are their indulgences in the sight of God? Our doctors have never dared to name any of the fathers as having instituted and published indulgences. And if these indulgences, which are represented as so salutary to mankind, have slumbered, as it were, for the space of a thousand years and more, the reason most probably is, *that covetousness* had not at that period, as at present, reached its *highest point.*" Again he exclaims, "Were such indulgences really available in heaven, we ought to pray to God that war might be waged against the pope, in order that he might throw open all the treasures of the church."

This reply produced a prodigious sensation in Prague. It restored to Huss the favor of many who had been alienated from him by the withdrawal of the German students: but at the same time it drew on him the hostility of the king. Wenceslaus was at war with Ladislaus, and he therefore favored the bulls launched by the pope against his enemy. He accordingly, for a time, withdrew his support from Huss.

Prague was then divided between two powerful parties. The time-servers and the enemies of the Reformation declared themselves

in favor of the bulls; while the most upright and pure minded arrayed themselves against them. To this time must be assigned the rupture between Huss and Stephen Paletz, an influential member of the clergy. Paletz had been his friend and disciple: but being as anxious for the advancement of his fortune as Huss was for the progress of the gospel, he preached in favor of the bulls and indulgences, and now evinced toward his former friend as much hatred as he had formerly testified affection and respect.

The baseness of Paletz, while it must have deeply wounded the generous and tender spirit of Huss, made the multitude indignant, and rendered their preacher still dearer to them: he had also the powerful support of the nobility; some of these sincerely admired his lofty character and the purity of his doctrines, while others supported him through hostility to the king, or through jealousy toward the clergy, or from a secret hope that a revolution would give them a share of the spoils. But Huss had still numerous adversaries in the university, and in the town council.

Meanwhile the warfare, which had commenced against Rome, was carried on by symbols as well as words. One day some of Huss's disci-

ples drew a sketch which attracted much attention. On one part of the picture Christ and his disciples were seen, the Master, meek and riding upon an ass, and his apostles following, in plain dress, and with naked feet. On the other was the pope, mounted on a superb charger, arrayed in the most costly apparel, wearing a temporal crown, followed by his cardinals, also well mounted, and accompanied by armed soldiers, drums, and trumpets. Thousands saw and exulted at the witty device.

So many elements of discord portended fresh troubles; but Huss was unmoved. He caused a placard to be put upon the doors of the churches and monasteries of Prague, inviting the public, and particularly all doctors, priests, monks, and scholars, to come forward and discuss the following question:—"Whether a crusade preached against a Christian people was to be reconciled with the honor of God, with the laws of Jesus, the duty of man, and the welfare of the country?"

At the day appointed, the concourse was prodigious. Huss, alarmed probably lest there should be a popular commotion, endeavored to dismiss the assembly; but the people would not separate. A doctor of laws, a canon in the church, attempted a defense of the pope

and his bulls. Huss refuted him triumphantly, with the Bible, the acts of ancient councils, and the Bohemian common law. With railing, in place of argument, his opponent exclaimed:—"You are a priest, and you abuse the pope your spiritual father. Only bad birds befoul their own nests. Ham was cursed for exposing the shame of his father." A murmur then arose among the people, and stones were beginning to fly, when Huss interposed and calmed the storm. Jerome, a learned and intimate friend of Huss, of whom we shall speak hereafter, followed Huss, and closed an eloquent speech by exclaiming:—"Let our friends follow us. Huss and myself are going to the palace, where we will expose the vanity of these indulgences." The multitude cried out, "What he says is true; he speaks well."

The rector of the academy, Marcus, interfered in his turn, and conjured the people not to go to the palace, for fear of greater mischief being done; but to return each to his own residence. The multitude at last dispersed, the students accompanying Jerome as the more learned: but the people followed John Huss to the chapel of Bethlehem, exclaiming as they parted, "Huss, remain firm, abandon us not."

CHAPTER VI.

The priests insulted—The opposers of indulgences beheaded—Prague in commotion—Huss pronounces a funeral eulogy on the deceased.

THE next day a formidable sedition arose: the crowd assembled in a public square, and thence spread themselves through the city, insulting, and threatening with death, every priest that they heard crying up the indulgences. The rector sent for Huss and Jerome to the college of St. Charles, and, in presence of a great number of officers of the university, prayed them to check the rioters. The assessors, doctors, and masters, joined with the rector, imploring them with tears, and invoking God and the saints. "Behold," said they, "our white hairs! and thinking of your youth, abandon your enterprise, before there results from it a frightful massacre in which its authors themselves may perish." "You say well," said Jerome, "and we will comply with your wishes; but judge yourselves, if it be not difficult to put down the truth." "I, also," said John Huss, "dread sedition. I have devoted myself to the truth, but would not dare to attempt anything opposed to justice. It is my duty to show that

those indulgences are devoid of virtue; yet I will not reject your prayers." "Dear master John," replied the rector, "do not forget how we defended you against the Germans, when no one so much as you was an object of hatred to the people, and who complained that you had deprived them of great profit, by expelling the others. The Germans are more anxious for your destruction than for ours: they swear, that in whatever place they meet you, they will kill you; and you have excited the hatred of the emperor Sigismund for the same reason. Postpone, therefore, your object to another time, in order to avoid a greater evil, and you will thus preserve your life." Huss gave his assent to these words, and promised to act in conformity with them.

The next Sunday, in the castle church, when the preacher assailed Huss with unmeasured abuse, in the hope of restoring to the doctrines of indulgences their former credit, a shoemaker from Poland, named Stasseck, came forward and gave the priest the lie. A great uproar arose: the warden of the castle was prevailed upon, by the offended party, to take the offender into custody, and deliver him over to the city magistrates. A similar disturbance occurred the same day at the church at Thiem; and a

third in the convent of St. James. In the church, while the preacher was commending the Papal bull, he was interrupted, by a student, in these words:—"Now it is plain that the pope is truly antichrist, since he has proclaimed a crusade against Christians." In the convent, the vender of indulgences was expelled by another student. Both the offenders were arrested, and, like the shoemaker, committed to the city jail.

From the well-known opinions of most of the members of the council, the worst was feared for the prisoners. The students were roused, arms were seized, and Huss, followed by a crowd of scholars and townspeople, repaired to the council house, and demanded the release of the prisoners. Accounts slightly vary as to the answer they received. One account states, the magistrates replied, "that it was astonishing that the professor of a university should dare to interfere in civil transactions, and speak in favor of open rebellion. Huss," they said, "might be content with having ruined the university, driven away the German students, and thus occasioned an irreparable injury to the crown of Bohemia, and the city of Prague. As to the prisoners, they might set their minds at ease, their petitions would, either the following morning, or perhaps the same day, be of some service to the

culprits." Another account states that one of the magistrates replied: "Dear master John, we are astonished that you light a fire in which you are in danger of being burned yourself. It is hard for us to pardon those who spare not even the sanctuary, who fill the city with tumult, and who, if order is not restored, will deluge the streets with blood. Retire in peace, nevertheless, and your request shall be granted." Both accounts are probably, in the main, correct. More than two thousand armed men had already appeared before the council house. The magistrates were in fear and perplexity; they wished to execute the prisoners, but feared the consequences, and different members of the council would naturally reply more or less favorably as their anger or their fears predominated.

Huss announced to the multitude that the prisoners were pardoned, who uttered a shout of joy. But soon blood was seen to flow from the prison. It was the blood of the prisoners. An executioner had been admitted through a back door, and the prisoners were beheaded. A wild commotion arose: young and old flew to arms; the council house was taken, but the judges had escaped. The thirst of the people for revenge was then turned into grief and tears. They broke

open the vault which concealed the bodies of the victims, and, wrapping them in winding sheets, carried them on a gilded bier, with funeral hymns, and a vast train of mourners, to the vaults of the chapel of Bethlehem. The students chanted around their tomb :—"These are the saints who have given their lives for the gospel of God."

Huss was at first silent. During eight days he gave himself up to retirement and sorrow; but reviving at length, he ascended his pulpit and cried, "These are the saints and martyrs." But he entreated the weeping people to beware of using violence, leaving it rather for God to deal with the wicked malice and remorseless tyranny of their enemies.

The magistrates, alarmed at the consequences of their own rashness, forbade him, under pain of heavy punishment, to make the most distant allusion in public to those who had recently been beheaded. But they were not aware that it was no longer in their power, or his, to arrest the progress of the Reformation. Huss could go along with it, and even to a considerable extent guide its course—to arrest it was out of his power, even had he desired.

CHAPTER VII.

Prague again laid under an interdict—Huss retires a second time—Employs his time in writing and preaching—Gerson—Pierre de Ailley.

Huss now became bolder than ever. He attacked the despotism and simony of the pontiffs, the revelry and pomp of the priests, and went on, as he himself declares, preaching, writing, giving no repose to his soul, grappling with the whole body of the clergy, without sparing even the most powerful, and to every authority opposing that of the Holy Scriptures. In consequence, the city of Prague was again laid under an interdict; public worship and funeral rites might not be celebrated, so long as Huss taught, preached, or even lived there. Serious preparations were made for a contest. The reformer's party was numerous and powerful; but the natural mildness, as well as the piety of Huss, made him abhor civil war and bloodshed. He again left his dear chapel at Bethlehem, and retired to his native village.

During this second retirement, Huss again followed the example of his Lord. He went into the towns and villages preaching among the poor; and followed by multitudes, who

wondered why this man, so modest, so grave, and at the same time so mild, should be proscribed and hated by the priests and the church.

It was also during this seclusion that Huss wrote his celebrated tract *On the Church;* and another, *On the Abominations of the Monks;* and a third on *The Members of Antichrist.* His style abounded with Scripture quotations, and was inspired by an ardent passion, sometimes degenerating into anger. It also presented some features not in accordance with the delicacy of modern taste. But frequently it contained figures, allegories, and rhetorical touches, that vividly recalled the ancient prophets from whom he drew his inspiration. He thundered against the innumerable inventions to swell the revenue of the church. Images, relics, legends, canonization, became, successively, the objects of his vehement attacks. He compared those who persecute and take the lives of saints to hunters, who gorge themselves upon their prey, and then make its eulogy to entice others to the chase—to the Jews, who killed the prophets, and then adorned their sepulchres—to the Romans, who murdered their emperors, and raised statues to their memory, and enrolled them among the gods. He branded the worship of saints in heaven,

as an invention of devils, to turn men from the love and charity prescribed by the gospel toward saints on earth.

He also wrote a short, but energetic, treatise, under the title of *The Six Errors.* The *first* was the error of the priests, who boasted of *making* the body of Jesus Christ in the mass, and of being *the creators of their Creator;* the *second* consisted in declaring, *I believe in the popes and the saints;* the *third* was the pretence of the priests to be able to remit the trespass and the penalty of sin to whom they pleased; the *fourth* error was implicit obedience to superiors, no matter what they ordered; the *fifth* consisted in not making any distinction, in their effect, between a just excommunication and one that was not just; and, lastly, the *sixth* error was simony, or buying and selling ecclesiastical preferments. Of this crime, Huss accused the greater part of the clergy. This little work was placarded on the door of the chapel at Bethlehem. It ran with wonderful rapidity through the whole of Bohemia; and its success was immense.

Meanwhile, the pope had not forgotten Huss. He craved the assistance of kings and universities against him; and enemies, as well as friends, multiplied. Gerson, an illustrious

member of the university of Paris, though loud in his declamations against the corruptions of the church, yet quite as loudly condemned Huss. Strange, indeed, was the union of light and darkness in that age, when such a man as Gerson could write thus to the archbishop of Prague:—"If other remedies fail, there remains but to lay the ax at the root of this accursed tree. It is your duty to avail yourself, to the utmost, of the secular arm; the salvation of souls committed to your care imposes this upon you." Pierre d'Ailly, another light of the university of Paris, was more guarded, and probed the difficulty to its source. "It is expedient," said he, "that these new heresies, [such he called the preaching of the pure gospel,] and their authors, should be driven from Bohemia and Moravia; but I see not how it can be accomplished but by bringing back the court of Rome to its ancient manners and customs. The *notorious vices* of the court of Rome trouble the Catholic faith, and corrupt it by errors."

CHAPTER VIII.

The council of Constance—Huss's position—State of the church—Huss summoned to Constance—Certificate of the grand inquisitor—Safe conduct of the emperor—Companions—State of mind.

CHRIST said to Paul, at Jerusalem, when his enemies were thirsting for his blood, "Be of good courage, Paul; for as thou hast testified the things concerning me at Jerusalem, so thou must testify at Rome also." So it was determined that, as Huss had testified for Christ in Bohemia, he should testify at CONSTANCE, before the assembled representatives of Europe. The time was now drawing near for the assembling of this far-famed council—a council to sit in judgment on three popes, and restore to the church, if possible, at least the semblance of unity. Before this council Huss was to be summoned, to answer for himself and his followers to the charge of promoting heresy in the church.

To understand fully his position at this time, it will be necessary to glance at the number and position both of his friends and foes.

His friends were numerous throughout Bohemia: and these included the king and queen,

many of the most powerful nobles, many among the literati of Prague, some even of the priests, and a multitude of the common people. Thousands also in Germany, and various parts of Europe, sympathized with Huss, because, though they knew him not personally, they cherished the same sentiments. But Bohemia, where alone he could expect an asylum in the approaching contest, was a small country. Her king was weak and indolent; her nobles, though brave, were but a handful in comparison with the number of his enemies.

Of his foes, the most formidable was John XXIII. But this pope was himself the prey of secret terrors, in the midst of his court at Bologna. His infallibility, in the name of which he pretended to open and shut heaven and hell at pleasure, did not shield him from continual alarm; for a new emperor, a foe to the monstrous abuses of the clergy, Sigismund, brother to Wenceslaus, had ascended the throne of Germany. This prince, a zealous Catholic, had long devoted himself to the defense of the church, and her deplorable state was to him a continual source of grief and humiliation. Three popes, with their partisans, divided Christendom; and while John XXIII. was denouncing his rivals from Bologna, Gregory XII., at Rimini,

and Benedict XIII., at Aragon, returned his maledictions with interest. The example of simony and profligacy set by the pontiffs had corrupted almost the entire mass of the clergy. Bohemia, Moravia, a part of Germany and England, were agitated to their centres by the new opinions. Superstition and dead formalities had usurped the place of piety among the laity. Above the din of universal anarchy in Europe was heard the hoarse thunder of Mussulman hordes, advancing upon her frontiers like a stormy sea, to wash out, in blood, the stains of unnumbered iniquities. At the sad spectacle, Sigismund was touched even to tears; but he comprehended not the cause. At once emperor and devotee, he abhorred all independence of mind, and attributed the evils of Europe to schism and the partisans of the new doctrines. Against these, therefore, he marshaled his forces. He believed a general council, convened for healing the schism, and strangling heresy, would restore the palmy days of the church.

The contemplated council was an object of terror to John XXIII., for he was well aware no one had done more than himself to make it necessary. He would have opposed the measure, but he dare not. His vanquisher, Ladislaus, pursued him with mortal hate; and the

pontiff's last hope against him was in the sword of the emperor. Pressed between Ladislaus, his enemy, and Sigismund, his defender; harrowed by the remembrance of a life spent in crime; expecting soon to be made a spectacle for the gaze of the world, he tremblingly bowed to the fate which he could not escape. It was of the utmost importance to him that the city selected as the seat of the council should not be within the dominions of the emperor. But the imperial city of Constance was proposed without his knowledge, and at once accepted by his legates. Subsequently he and the emperor met at Lodi. The conference was long; but the discussions insincere. The name of Constance having been pronounced,—"Holy father," said the emperor, in a determined tone, "does this city suit you?" "Yes, my dear son," replied the pope, "it does suit me;" and he bowed down his head with a shudder. As for Huss, he had nothing to hope from the emperor or pope, and quite as little from the clergy in general; for he had torn from them the mask of hypocrisy, and exposed their enormities to the gaze of the world.

The council was at length appointed. On the 30th of October, 1413, Sigismund announced to Europe that, in perfect accordance with Pope

John, whom he styled his sovereign lord, a council would assemble at Constance on the 1st of November, the following year. This city, he said, had been chosen as a place where entire freedom could be secured to all. He invited Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII., the king of France, and other sovereigns. "The malice of men," said he, in his letter to Charles VI., "has reached such a height that unless a prompt remedy be applied, it is to be feared that, ere long, a cure will become impossible." Among the leading objects, be it remembered, was the destruction of heresy. Now, as we have already seen, there was in Bohemia a man, who, by his name, his writings, the boldness of his speech, and especially by the troublesome brilliancy of his virtues, represented in his single person all the innovators in Europe. It was necessary to confound them all in his person; and John Huss was summoned before the council of Constance.

Huss returned to Prague, publicly declared his views, and called upon his former accusers, either by writing or by word of mouth, to convict him of error. A few days before his departure, in a paper affixed to the gates of the palace, he announced his determination to proceed to Constance, to justify himself before the

council—"So that," said he, "if any one suspects me of heresy, let him proceed thither, and prove, in the presence of the pope and the doctors, if I ever entertained or taught any false or mistaken doctrine. If any man can convict me of having taught any doctrine contrary to the Christian faith, I will consent to undergo all the penalty to which heretics are liable. But I trust God will not grant the victory to unbelievers—to men who outrage the truth."

He next announced that he was ready to render an account of his faith in presence of the archbishop and his clergy. Then he boldly applied for a certificate of his orthodoxy to the very person whose office it was to search out and condemn all heresy—to the bishop of Nazareth, grand inquisitor of the diocese of Prague. It is as difficult to believe, as it is impossible to deny, that he obtained what he demanded. The grand inquisitor gave him a certificate to the following effect:—

"By these presents we make known to all men, that we have often held converse with the honorable master, John Huss, bachelor in theology, of the celebrated university of Prague—that we have had several serious conferences with him relative to the Holy Scriptures and other matters—and that we have always con-

sidered him to be a faithful and good Catholic, not finding in him, up to this day, neither evil nor error. We certify, besides, that the said John Huss has declared his readiness to render reason of his faith, in presence of the archbishop and his clergy, against any one whatever that might come forward and accuse him of error or heresy; but that no one presented himself to support the charge. In faith of which we have delivered to him this letter, sealed with our great seal. Given at Prague the 30th day of August, 1414."

Armed with this paper, Huss proceeded to the abbey of St. James, where the barons and the archbishop of Prague were assembled on the public business of the kingdom. There he besought the archbishop to declare openly, if he either accused or suspected him of heresy. If he did not, he requested him to give him a public testimony of the fact.

The archbishop replied, that he knew not that John Huss was capable of any crime or fault; but he thought he ought to clear himself from the excommunication he had incurred.

Thus it appears that the enemies of Huss at Prague were at this juncture all silent. Did they dread another commotion, and wish also to remove all the obstacles which might have

prevented his departure or slackened his journey, confident that if he once got into the hands of the council he would never return?

In the month of October, 1414, Huss bade adieu to his chapel at Bethlehem and to his friends and disciples. Alas! he was never to return. He left behind his faithful friend Jerome; and their parting was not without emotion. "Dear master," said Jerome, "be firm, maintain intrepidly what thou hast written and preached against the pride, avarice, and other vices of the churchmen, with arguments drawn from the Holy Scriptures. Should this task become too severe for thee—should I learn that thou hast fallen into any peril, I shall fly forthwith to thy assistance."

Huss left Prague, provided with a safe-conduct from King Wenceslaus, and on his way received the one he had demanded of the emperor. This notable document ran thus:—"Sigismund, by the grace of God, king of the Romans, &c., to all ecclesiastical and secular princes, &c., and to all our other subjects, greeting. We recommend to you, with a full affection, to all in general, and to each in particular, the honorable master JOHN HUSS, bachelor in divinity, and master of arts, the bearer of these presents, journeying from Bohemia to the council of

Constance; whom we have taken under our protection and safeguard, and under that of the empire—enjoining you to receive him and treat him kindly, furnishing him with all that shall be necessary to speed and assure his journey, as well by water as by land, without taking anything from him or his under any pretext whatever; and calling on you to allow him to PASS, SOJOURN, STOP, AND RETURN FREELY AND SURELY; providing him even, if necessary, with good passports, for the honor and respect of the imperial majesty. Given at Spires, this 18 day of October, 1414, the 3 year of our reign in Hungary, and the 5 of that of the Romans. (E.")

John Huss was accompanied by several noble barons, Henry de Latrembock, Wenceslaus Duba, and John de Chlum. The conduct of the last-named affords a pure model of the most touching and most devoted friendship. His name, in the eyes of posterity, is inseparable from that of John Huss.

Huss did not deceive himself as to his perilous position. Some of his most bitter enemies had preceded him to Constance, and, in one of his farewell letters, he says:—"Probably you will never more behold my face at Prague." Indeed, the very precautions he took before his

departure prove that he had calculated the extent of his danger: but satisfied that duty called him to Constance, no danger could induce him to shrink from the undertaking.

In the letters which John Huss wrote at this period, a progressive work of grace is beautifully manifested. His soul, before so upright, was gaining in mildness and patience. He evinces no longer anything of the passion of the sectary. He is not intoxicated by the noise of popular acclamations. Almost alone among strangers, he communes with his own heart, and listens only to the voice of conscience. Divine grace operates within him with greater power, and from the period of his departure from Prague till his death, he shows himself as grand, by his patience, resignation, and evangelical sweetness, as he had before conscientious, by the purity of his morals, his zeal, and his determination.

To a friend and disciple he wrote: "May the glory of God and the salvation of souls occupy thy mind, and not the possession of benefices and estates. Beware of adorning thy house more than thy soul; and, above all, give thy care to the spiritual edifice. Be pious and humble with the poor; and consume not thy substance in feasting. Shouldst thou not amend

thy life, and refrain from superfluities, I fear thou wilt be severely chastened, as I am myself; I who also made use of such things, led away by custom, and troubled by a spirit of pride. Thou knowest my doctrine, for thou hast received my instructions from thy childhood. But I conjure thee, by the mercy of the Lord, not to imitate me in any of the vanities into which thou hast seen me fall." On this letter was inscribed these prophetic words: "I conjure thee, my friend, not to break this seal until thou shalt have acquired the certitude that I am dead."

Nothing occurred to disturb his journey. As he attacked the abuse of certain principles, more than the principles themselves, his words found favor with the people, and even a portion of the clergy, who had themselves suffered greatly from the extortions of their superiors. But the bishops and doctors understood fully the immense bearing of the two capital points on which John Huss separated from them, namely, *that simoniacal and impious priests were no true ministers of Christ; and that the Holy Scriptures, rather than the church, was the rule of faith.* They well knew their conduct could never stand the test of these vital principles; and that if they prevailed, their credit and power

were gone, and the sources of their gains dried up. Before, therefore, he even appeared in the presence of his judges his case was decided. To recant or suffer was the only alternative.

CHAPTER IX.

Constance—Europe in motion—The great council—Huss's journey—Kindness of the people.

THE city of Constance is beautifully situated on a lake of the same name, in the grand duchy of Baden, on the border of Switzerland. During the middle ages it was one of the great imperial cities, with a population of thirty-six thousand. It had extensive linen manufactures, and a great inland trade. But a blight has rested upon it since the assembling of the great council. Industry is banished, the grass grows in the streets, and the population is reduced to five thousand. The great hall in which the council met, one hundred and fifty-three feet long, and sixty broad, whose doors turn on plated hinges, and have the figures of warriors carved on them, is now employed as a yarn market.

Toward this celebrated city vast multitudes were now wending their way. Europe was in

motion. The emperor and the pope, princes and nobles, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, doctors and professors, with their retinues, were seen approaching from every direction. It is said there were attracted to Constance, of princes and nobles, two thousand three hundred; clergy of all grades, one thousand eight hundred; laymen, eighty thousand; and, it is added, of courtesans, one thousand five hundred.

To stand before this great assembly, Huss had now left his weeping friends and commenced his journey. He frequently wrote to them in language expressive of his own steadfastness, and his earnest desire for their fidelity. "Think not," said he, on his departure from Cracowiez, "that, if I am doomed to endure sufferings, my doctrines are therefore false. Continue steadfast in the truth which God, through me your faithful pastor, has made known to you, and beware of seducers. I am now going, under a royal escort, into the midst of my numerous and powerful enemies; and you will undoubtedly find that as false witnesses formerly rose against Christ, so will they and other enemies, first among the bishops and doctors, and then from among the secular princes and pharisees, arise against me in this council. But my confidence is in the living God, who will give me a tongue and wis-

dom to withstand them; and will enable me with a joyful and resolute spirit, after the example of Jesus, to despise temptation, imprisonment, and an ignominious death. Beloved, pray God to give me a firm mind, and enable me to abide in his truth, to hasten my death if it will redound to his glory and the honor of his name; and to strengthen me to endure whatever trials of whatever nature may come upon me. But if, on the contrary, my return will contribute to advance the holy cause, then, O Father! grant that I may be restored to my own country without spot or injury to my conscience; or that, in other words, I may not shrink from the gospel, but be more and more enlightened by its clear and sanctifying truth—that I may extirpate the doctrines of antichrist, and leave a bright example for the imitation of my brethren."

At Pernau the travelers passed the boundaries of Bohemia; nor could they, without some unpleasant apprehensions, enter a territory, many of whose sons (the German students and professors who left the university five years previous) had endeavored to cover their own disgrace by slandering Bohemia, and especially Huss. But they were happily disappointed. "Be it known to you," says Huss to his friends,

"that I have not found it necessary to travel once incognito since the day of my departure, but have ridden on horseback, and with my features exposed to view.

"On my drawing near to Pernau, I found the cure and his vicars waiting for me. When I came close to them, he drank my health in a cup of wine. Both he and his friends listened to me with a charitable spirit; and he informed me that he had always been my friend. All the Germans beheld me with pleasure in the new town. From thence we proceeded to Weyden, where we excited the attention of quite a crowd. At Saltzbach, I thus addressed the consuls and notables of the town:—'I am that John Huss, of whom beyond a doubt you have heard much evil. Here I am; ascertain the real state of the case by questioning me yourselves.' After a great number of questions, they received most favorably all that I addressed to them. We next passed through Inspruck, and spent the night at Lauff, where the cure, who is a great jurist, and his vicars, had come to see me. I had a conference with him, and he also received my words perfectly well. We next reached Nuremberg, where certain dealers who preceded us had announced my arrival. The people had taken their station in the streets and

public places, looking out for my coming, and inquiring which was John Huss. After dinner the cure wrote to me to say that he should be glad to have a long conversation with me. On hearing this, I immediately rose from table and went to meet him and his friends. But as they wished to confer in private, I said to them, 'I speak only in public, those who wish to hear me have only to listen;' and from that moment until night we discussed matters in presence of the consuls and townspeople. At last they said to me: 'Master, all that we have just heard is Catholic; we have taught these things many years, believing them true, and so we still consider them. Undoubtedly you will return from this council with great honor.'"

From Nuremberg he traveled to Swabia. Here too he met with the greatest courtesy and respect. At Biberach, where he disputed with several priests and learned men on obedience to the pope, the people led him triumphantly through the streets. "Be it known to you," says he, "that I have hitherto met with no enemies, but am everywhere hospitably received, and find my sentiments universally approved. Indeed, I must confess, that on this subject I am fortunate in having no greater enemies than some obscure persons in Bohemia. What can

I add more? I am kindly and honorably treated by the lords of Latzembock and Chlum, who are my heralds; or, to speak more correctly, my advocates for the truth. Through their help and God's favor, all passes most suitably." Though thus occasionally cheered, and though his journey was in fact a triumph, yet, as already remarked, Huss knew his danger, and was preparing for the worst.

In the mean time, John XXIII. was also on his way to Constance. His prospect, like that of Huss, was dark and foreboding; but, unlike the reformer, he was uncheered by any consciousness of uprightness, or any of those spiritual consolations which the latter derived from above. On a mountain of the Tyrol the pope's equipage being overset, he considered it an alarming omen. "Through Satan," said he, "I have fallen here. Why did I not rather remain at Bologna?" Surveying the city in the valley—"I see, I see," he exclaimed, "this is the ditch where foxes are taken."

CHAPTER X.

Huss arrives at Constance, and lodges with a poor widow —People flock in crowds to see him—Prepares to preach—Deceived by the bishop of Constance—Audience with the pope and cardinals—Made prisoner—A doctor in disguise.

Huss arrived at Constance on the 3d of November. He found, lodgings with a poor widow, whom he likened to the widow of Sarepta, who received the prophet Elijah; but though she gave him a shelter, she could not insure him an asylum.

The companions of Huss, Chlum and Latzembock, soon waited on the pontiff, announcing the arrival of Huss under the emperor's safe-conduct, and begging the pope, on his part, to inform them, without reserve, whether he should be safe at Constance. "Had he killed my own brother," replied John, "not a hair of his head should be touched during his stay here."

Here Huss maintained his doctrines with word and pen, and said mass in a room at his lodgings, where the people flocked in crowds to see and hear him. He was in hopes of being allowed to preach in public; and had prepared two sermons especially adapted to the occasion. He professed in them to believe with the

Catholic Church; he declared his belief in tradition, and quoted from the writings of the fathers: but yet he maintained the grand doctrine, that *the Scriptures, well studied and understood, were the real rule of faith*, and *that this rule was quite sufficient for salvation*. Thus, in spite of the prejudices of education, and the darkness of the age, he always came round right in the end. In *speculation*, he allowed tradition; but, *practically*, the Bible, and the Bible only, was his rule of faith. He also added that evangelical faith necessarily included obedience and love—that a man, in mortal sin, was only a Christian in name, and could not recite the creed without lying. He exhorted the church to peace and union. As to the corruption, luxury, and simony of the clergy, his language was more moderate than many of the principal preachers of that period. Beyond doubt, he intended by these two discourses to win over the minds of men to the truth and to himself. To prohibit him to preach, therefore, was to announce beforehand that his ruin was decided upon.

John Huss was not mistaken when he asserted, that his most bitter enemies came from Bohemia. Stephen Paletz has already been named. He had preceded Huss to Constance. Here

he associated himself with Michael Causis, formerly a parish priest in Prague, and a boon companion of King Wenceslaus. Having undertaken to advance a certain project of the king, he received a large sum of money in advance, with which he absconded in the night, and fled to the residence of the pope. He there ingratiated himself into favor with the pontiff and cardinals, and became a servile instrument in promoting their schemes.

The first care of this promising brotherhood was, to placard through Constance the documents in which John Huss was branded as a heretic, and an excommunicated person. Huss complained of this to the pope, but received no redress. "I can do nothing in the matter," said the pontiff; "it is your own countrymen who are against you." Paletz and Causis drew up certain articles, which they pretended to extract from the works of John Huss, and principally from his *Treatise on the Church.* Then taking an infinity of trouble, as an old author of his Life expresses it, running here and there, wherever they could fall in with the cardinals, bishops, and monks, they exhibited to them these articles. At the same time they solemnly protested that they could, when necessary, produce others of greater enormity, published by

John Huss, in opposition to the pope and the church. Thus these firebrands inflamed those who were already irritated, and persuaded them to determine on arresting John Huss.

The game, however, required to be played with some dexterity. The spread of free principles among the people could not be overlooked; besides, John Huss had come to Constance under the protection of the emperor.

It was evident there were doubt and hesitancy in high quarters. It was, therefore, an object to cut off all connection between Huss and the people, who already began to suspect foul play. The bishop of Constance therefore repaired to Huss, and artfully insinuated "that a sharp contest had arisen on his account between the pope and cardinals, but which had terminated in favor of Huss—that the pope would, that same week, solemnly liberate him from the curse of excommunication—but that, till that was done, he must, to avoid giving offense, abstain from preaching and reading mass, and appear at church only in the character of a layman." Huss, conscious of his own innocence, and desiring retirement to prepare for his defense, too readily listened to these assurances. Artful contrivances were also resorted to, to keep the people away from him.

The rumor, that the emperor would soon arrive, hastened the operations of the conspirators. It was the middle of the day, on the 28th of November. The inhabitants of the city and strangers were at dinner. The Papal palace was guarded by the most trusty soldiers; and armed men were stealthily introduced into several houses in the streets of St. Galen, and even under the very roof where Huss lodged. The pope and cardinals were now ready to pounce upon their victim. Still they preferred stratagem to force. Accordingly, the bishops of Augsburg and Trent, the mayor of Constance, and several noblemen, broke in unexpectedly upon Huss while at dinner with John de Chlum. They informed him that the cardinals were assembled, and having concluded their other deliberations, and having still time to spare, they were willing to give him an opportunity to come before them, as he had often expressed a desire, and render an account of his doctrines.

"I did not come here," said Huss, "with the intention of pleading my cause in private before the pope and the cardinals; I never desired any such thing: but I wished to appear before the general council, in the presence of all, and there, openly and plainly, to reply on every

point proposed to me, according as God should inspire me for my defense. Yet I do not refuse to appear previously before the cardinals; and if they act unfairly toward me, I shall put my trust in our Saviour Jesus Christ, and shall be more happy to die for his glory than to live in denying the truth, such as it is taught in the Holy Scriptures."

The persons sent, manifested no hostile disposition toward Huss. When, therefore, they urged him to accompany them, he got on horseback with John de Chlum, and followed them to the Papal palace.

Huss entered the conclave unembarrassed; and when he had saluted the members, they thus addressed him: "Master John Huss, we have learned concerning you many things which, if true, cannot be tolerated. It is asserted that you teach the gravest errors—the most opposed to the doctrines of the true church—that you have already disseminated them through the whole of Bohemia. We have summoned you to appear before us that we may know the truth."

"Reverend fathers," replied Huss, "learn that I would rather die than be knowingly guilty of a single error, still more of a great

number, and those of a grave character, as you express it. Well convinced of my innocence, I have come of my own free will to this council in order to receive the correction to which I may be liable for every error that can be proved against me."

"It is well spoken," was the reply; and the whole conclave rose and left the room.

Before Huss and his friend Chlum could recover from their surprise at being thus left, they found themselves prisoners, in the hands of armed men. Just at this moment an insinuating and cunning fellow slipped through the soldiers, and, with an affected air of simplicity, and awkwardly bowing, thus accosted Huss: "Master, I am a simple-minded and ignorant man, anxious to gain instruction. I have heard that many opinions, contrary to the Catholic faith, have been attributed to you. Now these things agitate my mind, and draw it in different directions, loving, as I do, the truth. Therefore, I beseech you, by the love you profess for Christian charity and pious men, to teach me, a wretched sinner, something positive. It is confidently asserted, in the first place, that in your opinion, after the consecration by the priest, there only remains a common piece of

bread in the sacrament of the altar." "That is false,"* said John Huss. "How," persisted the inquirer; "do you not think that such is the case?" "Certainly not," said Huss; "I believe no such thing." The interrogator, however, repeated the same question for the third time, when John de Chlum exclaimed with indignation, "Why are you so importunate? If any one were to affirm, or deny a thing to me only a single time, I should believe him; and yet you, after hearing the master express his opinion several times, still interrogate him." "Noble lord," said he, "I pray you to pardon me. I am only a simple and ignorant man; and what I have done was merely with a view to gain instruction." Then changing the subject, he proposed another doubt; inquiring in what manner the divinity and humanity were united in the person of Christ. "In my opinion," said Huss to Chlum, in the Bohemian dialect, "this monk is not so simple as he pretends to be; he proposes to me a point of extreme difficulty." Then turning to the monk, he said, "Brother, you represent yourself to be simple-minded; but, from what I can perceive, you smack somewhat of the double-dealer."

* Huss verily believed, to the day of his death, the silly dogma of transubstantiation.

The monk cried out against this. "I will prove what I advance," said Huss. "Simplicity requires a certain agreement between the mind and the mouth—between the thought and the words—which I perceive not in you. Your mouth, indeed, represents you as a simple and ignorant man; but your difficult questions plainly denote a subtil and exercised mind. Notwithstanding what I suspect, I will explain the point to you." The monk listened to the explanation, and disappeared.

John Huss then learned from the soldiers that this pretended monk was Professor Didacus, the most able theologian of Lombardy. "What a pity I was not aware of it!" said he; "I should have acted differently toward him. Would to God that all my adversaries resembled him! Fortified by the Scriptures, I should not fear one of them."

CHAPTER XI.

Treachery of the pope and cardinals—Huss arrested—Fidelity of John de Chlum—Indignation of the Bohemian states—The emperor orders his liberation—The emperor circumvented—He endeavors to excuse his conduct to the Bohemians.

Huss was now completely in the hands of his enemies. Yet his honesty and frankness had thus far baffled all their wiles. They had succeeded in drawing nothing from him by which to condemn him. Until four o'clock in the afternoon, the pope and his cardinals were in council, while Huss and his friend remained in the hands of the soldiers. Paletz, Causis, and several others, insisted, by every possible argument, that John Huss should not be set at liberty. They passed and repassed the spot where he was, insulting him, and crying out, "Now we have thee, and thou shalt not escape till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

At the approach of night an officer of the pope informed Chlum that he was at liberty, but that Huss must remain a prisoner.

John de Chlum, full of indignation, entered the pope's chamber and demanded why he had violated the emperor's safe-conduct, and his

own solemn pledge? With many excuses, the head of the church protested that the arrest did not take place by his authority, but by that of the cardinals, and that he was himself completely in their power. To them, he added with a sigh, application must be made. Chlum then proceeded to the four cardinals, who represented the German, French, English, and Italian nations. The first replied, that the emperor's safe-conduct derived its authority from the council itself, which was at liberty to acknowledge or reject it as they pleased. The second declared, that no faith need be kept with heretics. The other two, informed of his arrival, closed the door upon him without hearing him at all. Like a mother, whose child had been stolen from her, the knight rushed out among the people who were hovering round the pope's lodgings, from sympathy, as he supposed, with the prisoner. But how was he disappointed! The whole afternoon the priests, by means of their creatures dispersed in all quarters, had spread a report that Huss had *no* "safe-conduct"—was an outlaw—in spite of which he had daringly remained in Constance for the last month: but being that very morning detected, he had attempted to escape by throwing himself upon a straw cart; but that he had been

brought back by his own countrymen, and by them delivered up to suffer the punishment he deserved. The ignorant populace had readily been duped by this artful falsehood; and Chlum, instead of meeting with sympathy, was compelled to listen to taunts, threats, and abuse from the misguided multitude.

The next morning Chlum wrote to the emperor, minutely detailing the whole proceedings, and entreating help and justice at his hands. He also sent a similar account to the Bohemian government. During that and the following day, he traversed the streets, exhibiting the large parchment containing the emperor's safe-conduct: he also affixed a large placard, in his own name, to the doors of the cathedral and council house, stating what an act of tyranny and treachery had been exercised toward Master John Huss, in spite of the imperial safe-conduct; and that the emperor and the empire would never submit to such an insult offered to themselves.

When this shameful violation of all honor and decency was known at Prague, the city was in commotion. A number of protests were at once signed; several barons and powerful noblemen wrote pressing letters to the emperor:— "John Huss," said they, "departed with full

confidence in the guaranty given him in your imperial majesty's letter. But we understand he has been seized, even with your safe-conduct in his possession; and not only seized, but cast into prison, and without being convicted or even heard. Every one here, princes or barons, rich or poor, has been astonished to hear of this event: each man asks his neighbor, how the holy father could so shamefully violate the sanctity of the land, the plain rules of justice, and, finally, your majesty's safe-conduct? how, in fact, he could thus throw into prison a just and innocent man?"

The viceroy thus wrote to Zdenko of Wirtemburg, in the name of the other states:— "We Bohemians demand, that he who, in the presence of the bishops of the country, was fully justified, and in whom not one iota of unsound doctrine was found, should be immediately emancipated from prison; and not given up to scorn and contempt, through the false witness and calumny of his enemies; and without fair examination."

The emperor meantime received the communication of Chlum. When he found the pope and cardinals had violated his safe-conduct, he shook with rage. Immediately he issued express commands to his ambassadors at the coun-

cil to liberate the prisoner. "On the instant," wrote he, "liberate John Huss; and if resistance be made, break open the doors." He also hastened on to Constance, where he arrived on Christmas eve. Meanwhile Huss was not liberated. The crafty cardinals and bishops persuaded the ambassadors to wait until the emperor's arrival. As to Sigismund, the pope and his conclave knew their man. They persuaded him that no faith was to be kept with heretics, and that a foe to the church must of necessity be also an enemy to the throne. Still, to deliver up the victim cost the emperor a struggle. It was like delivering up the lamb to blood-thirsty wolves, and his feelings of humanity revolted. It was also a breach of plighted faith, and he could not but be conscious of his own degradation. But the pope and his conclave succeeded.

When, early on the ensuing day, Chlum repaired to the house of Sigismund to receive an answer to the remonstrance of the Bohemians, he was told that his majesty was attending divine service. Hastening to the cathedral, he observed with dismay, mingled with contempt, that during the celebration of high mass the emperor had laid aside his royal robes and arrayed himself in a priest's garb; while, with a taper in his hand, and a sanctimonious coun-

tenance, he chanted the verse in St. Luke,—"And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." After this, Chlum had little hope from the emperor. He saw, that, blinded as he was by bigotry and superstition, he was not likely to withstand the craft and perseverance of those perfidious men, who were thirsting for the blood of Huss. "Nothing more," he wrote, "is to be hoped for from the emperor, who firmly believes that Heaven and the pardon of his sins can be obtained through the priests alone; and the people declare that one who conducts himself so piously in this life will be canonized at his death. Truly, among such saints our Huss must appear a very devil."

Sigismund, however, was ill at ease; he studiously avoided Chlum, whose glance he could not endure. To the Bohemian states he some time afterward wrote a long letter, vainly endeavoring to clear himself. "Had Huss," said he, "accompanied me to Constance, instead of being there in my absence, his affairs would not have taken so ill a turn. God is my witness, that I am unable to express how much I was afflicted by his ill fortune. The active measures that I took in his favor are matters of public notoriety—for I went so far as several

times to leave the assembly in anger, and even once quitted the city; upon which the fathers of the council sent to inform me that if I stopped the course of their justice, they had nothing more to do at Constance. I therefore determined to abstain from any further interference, for had I interested myself further in John Huss's favor, the council would have been dissolved."

Huss remained a week confined under a strong guard in the house of the clerk of the cathedral. Thence he was conducted to the prison of the monastery of the Dominicans: this monastery stood on the banks of the Rhine, at the outlet of the lake of Constance, and the dungeon of Huss was close by the receptacle of the filth of the monastery. From the dampness and impurity of the air, he was soon thrown into a raging fever, which placed his life in the utmost danger. The pope, with an intention, perhaps, rather cruel than charitable, sent his own physician to him; "for he feared," says an old historian, "that John Huss might die a natural death."

CHAPTER XII.

Triumphs of grace—Huss visited by the commissioners—Writings falsified—Denied an advocate—Visited by John de Chlum.

THE religion of Christ is an enigma to the unconverted; it reverses all their preconceived opinions. "Happy are ye," say they, "when the world smiles; when the sun of prosperity shines; when wealth pours into your coffers; when you are clothed in splendor and fare sumptuously; when your bed is downy, and all that can gratify a refined taste and a cultivated intellect is yours; happy is the man who has health, wealth, and honor." How strange to such the language of Christ: "Happy are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." To those who know God, who are his by adoption and a new creation, this is all plain. "*Always rejoicing*," says St. Paul. And yet, from the same lips we hear: "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths

oft.* Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Such was the experience of Paul—none more afflicted, none more comforted. And as was the power of religion then, such has it always been. "My Master," said a minister of the last century, who, like Huss, was thrown into a noisome dungeon, "never sends his servants a warfare at their own charges. He gives strength according to our day; for when I came into the dungeon amid the blood and filth from the butcher's slaughter over it, my soul was so filled with the love of God, that it was a paradise to me. Then could I cry out, O the glorious liberty of the sons of God! And I fell down on my knees and

* Imminent exposure to death.

gave thanks that he counted me worthy to be put in a dungeon for the truth's sake; and I prayed that my enemies might be saved from the wrath to come. I think, with as much desire as I could feel for my own mother's children, I wished they were as happy in their own houses as I was in the dungeon." Thus God deals with his servants; their extremities are his opportunities for displaying the riches of his grace. In the furnace they triumph. John Huss has left us no record, in detail, of his prison hours; but the memorial of God's mercy in these hours of darkness has not perished. It is inscribed on the records of eternity, and to those records he referred his sympathizing friends. "When we shall meet in the delicious peace of the future life," says he, "you will learn how *effectually* God has supported me in the midst of my temptations and trials."

But while all was peace within, all was storm and tempest without. From the moment that the emperor abandoned John Huss, nothing interrupted the course of his enemies. Michael Causis drew up against him a memorial, in eight articles, founded on as many points of his doctrine. But his attacks did not cease there. "John Huss," said he, "has quite ruined the university of Prague, by depending on the se-

cular authority to oppress the Germans; he has defended Wiclif's errors; he has compromised among themselves the clergy and the seculars, by leading each party to suppose that it would obtain possession of the spoils of the other. For all these reasons," continued he, "if John Huss were to escape safe and sound from the council, he would do more injury to the church than any heretic from the time of Constantine."

This memorial was favorably received, and a few days had scarcely elapsed from the commencement of his imprisonment, when the pope appointed three prelates, as commissioners, to take charge of the cause. Doctors were also appointed to examine his books, and report thereon.

The commissioners also received the testimony of several ecclesiastics of Prague against Huss. They then proceeded to the monastery where he was confined. Though in a raging fever, and in the midst of acute sufferings, he was obliged to hear the reading of the testimony produced against him by his accusers. The commissioners next presented him with a series of articles, which Paletz pretended to have extracted from his *Treatise on the Church*, but which had been designedly falsified. They told

him he should be shortly called to answer on all these points.

Huss, who, as already stated, was in a high fever, and whose body trembled from exhaustion, raised himself on his straw, and leaning on one arm, said, "You see, reverend fathers, my present condition. Judge, then, for yourselves whether I am just now able to defend myself, either before you or a more public assembly. Rather inform those who have sent you what you have seen here, and tell them, that in spite of my pains and misery, I will, through God strengthening me, still defend my doctrines, provided they will grant me an advocate."

To allow John Huss an advocate would be to allow their iniquity to be unveiled. This assistance, which is granted as a *right* to even murderers, and which he asked as a favor, was denied to John Huss, under the shameful pretext that the canons declared it to be a crime to defend any man suspected of heresy.

"I besought the commissioners," said Huss, "to grant me an advocate; they at first granted my request, but afterward refused it. I therefore place my confidence in our Saviour Jesus Christ. May he be at once my Advocate and my Judge!"

John Huss had hitherto been deprived of all free communication with his friends. But his faithful friend Chlum now overcame all obstacles, found his way to the prisoner, and furnished him with pen, ink, paper, and a Bible. His enemies were unable to press on the trial as soon as they wished, and Huss gradually mended. From his sick bed he wrote his energetic letters; and he who, above all persons, seemed to need comfort, was found comforting his brethren. "The Jews," says he, "once burned the book of one of their prophets; but they could not, by that means, prevent the fulfillment of the fearful prophecy. And should the spirit of burning extend yet further, the council of Constance cannot stretch its authority into Bohemia, our dear native country. It is written, 'Then shall be great tribulations, such as have not been since the beginning of the world, neither shall be; and except those days be shortened, there shall no flesh be saved: nevertheless, for the elects' sake, those days shall be shortened.'" All his letters at this time, and the testimony of contemporary writers, evince his meekness, yet firmness and holy boldness. His angelic humility and resignation were as constant as his misfortunes. Formerly his indignation at the numberless abominations which

were committed in the name of religion sometimes degenerated into violence and anger; now these defects had given place to their opposite virtues. Through the sanctifying Spirit he was becoming fully prepared for the crown of immortality in heaven, while his enemies were intending for his immolation upon earth.

While the priests were seeking to avenge, in his blood, the wounds their pride and avarice had suffered, the very men that guarded him were touched with his fervent piety and Christian resignation; and several of them evinced a great eagerness to receive his instructions. "Thou desirest me," said he to one of them, "to give thee a few words on the state of marriage into which thou art about to enter. It is no easy matter to do this as I should desire, for the subject is one on which much is to be said. My own limited faculties, my confinement, and my absolute want of books, are so many obstacles to my writing for thee as I should like. Yet I will not leave thy demand unanswered." He then gave such exhortations as evinced a pure heart, and a strong sense of moral obligation.

At this period he wrote short treatises on *Marriage*, on the *Ten Commandments*, and on the *Three Enemies of Man*. It is not without

emotion that we read, at the end of some of these treatises, the names of Robert, James, and Gregory, his keepers, for whom he had prepared them. Several times, when his enemies and judges entered his prison, they found these rude and uneducated men listening attentively to his instructions; and perceived him to be more occupied with the perils that threatened their souls than with his own personal dangers.

He also, in a letter to his friends, states what he had to endure from the rage of his adversaries. "Learn," said he, "that in translating my letters, they have added to them a quantity of falsehoods; and they write against me so many untruths, that I have enough to do to reply to them from my prison. Their malice is equal to their fury. Pray to God for me, that he may come to my aid. All my hope rests in him, and in your prayers. Implore him, therefore, to vouchsafe to me the aid of his Spirit, that I may confess his name even unto death. If he deigns to receive me at the present time, his holy will be done: but if it be pleasing to him that I should live, and be restored to you, his will still be blessed."

"This declaration of our Saviour," said he, "is to me a great source of consolation, 'Blessed

are ye when men shall hate you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, for great is your reward in heaven.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

Resignation of John XXIII.—His flight—Brought back and imprisoned in the same place with John Huss—Wiclif's bones disinterred and burned.

Huss, about this time, witnessed the downfall of one of his most imbittered enemies. The council, which had spent a large portion of its time in the persecution of a single individual, had now begun, in good earnest, to turn its attention to the extinction of the schism.

Gregory XII., by his legate, offered to resign, provided his two rivals would resign also. He entreated the emperor and the fathers, not to allow Balthassar Cossa, who called himself John XXIII., to preside longer in the council; especially when the subject of schism was to be discussed. This was approved of; and the general opinion was, that the unity and peace of the church could be restored only by the abdication of all the three popes. The chief difficulty was to get rid of Pope John, who had,

up to this time, presided over the assembly. Every effort to induce him to resign having failed, his adversaries determined on more efficient measures. They resolved to establish, in a formal manner, the superiority of general councils over the pontiffs, and thus, if necessary, depose him. But John still continued intractable. It is doubtful, indeed, whether, by artifice and obstinacy, he would not have finally triumphed, had not a terrible blow suddenly disarmed him.

In a secret meeting a long list of accusations were brought forward against him, "including," says his secretary, Thiery d'Niem, "all the mortal sins, and a multitude of abominable acts not fit to be named." Informed of this by his spies, John, in the utmost dismay, assembled the cardinals devoted to his interests, and asked their advice. He confessed some of the charges, denied others, and proposed to escape the ignominy of a public exposure by making a sincere confession before the council. The cardinals proceeded to deliberate, and several thought the honor of the Papacy required the whole matter to be kept secret. They feared that, by making public the crimes of the pope, they should afford cause of triumph to those who defended the doctrines of Huss and Wiclif, and invali-

date, in the eyes of the people, his official acts. This opinion also prevailed in the council; and therefore every effort was made to induce John to resign. The pontiff, still under the influence of dreadful fear, promised compliance.

A form of resignation was drawn up; and a few days after, the pope read aloud the solemn engagement, and took an oath to observe it faithfully. The emperor, carried away by a fit of enthusiastic joy, rose from his throne, laid aside his crown, and falling on his knees before the pope, kissed his feet. The patriarch of Constantinople, in the name of the entire council, performed the like act.

This piece of folly restored courage to the man who had already looked upon himself as lost. A new struggle arose between the emperor and the pope, in which both resorted to all their address and cunning. John being called upon to name his commissioners, to carry into effect his resignation, refused to comply; and, disguising his bitter hatred under the appearance of great respect, endeavored to gain over the emperor to his side. He revived an ancient custom of the popes, and consecrated for Sigismund a *golden rose*, which was received with every mark of respect and thankfulness. Rejoicings and fetes took place on the occasion,

while the two cunning actors were intently eyeing each other.

But while the pope was playing this game, the terrible accusations, hitherto kept secret, were again brought forward. John now no longer thought of coming off victorious, but of flying. Sigismund penetrated his design, and declared no man should leave the council without formal permission. Guards were placed, who watched every step the pope took outside of the city, while spies rendered an account of his most secret manœuvres. John finally tried the weapon he had so often found successful; he attempted to corrupt the emperor, and purchase his freedom for a sum of money. But Sigismund was immovable—he redoubled his precautions, and, determined to trust only his own eyes, made the pope a visit. He found him reclining on his bed. "Holy father," said he, "how is your health at present?" "I am quite nervous and agitated," replied the pope; "the air of Constance disagrees with me so much that I cannot exist here." "That is strange," observed the emperor; "for the air of Constance is considered agreeable and pure." He then represented that there were in the environs a number of country seats, among which he could choose a residence, after the

conclusion of the council; but added, if he had any intention of withdrawing, he should not do it secretly, but inform him. "Besides," said Sigismund, "it is my duty to watch over the safety of your person, and I will go with you myself." So powerful a keeper was not at all to the pope's taste. He therefore returned thanks, and promised to remain until the council was dissolved. When the emperor retired, John vented his rage in the most violent language. "The fool," said he, "the drunken wretch—that would willingly have sold himself if I had purchased him."

Determined to escape from Constance, the pope proceeded to concert his plans with his friend, Frederick, duke of Austria.

On the 20th of March, 1415, the duke arranged that a splendid tournament should take place in the city. The council forgot its deliberations, and flocked together to witness the sport. While seculars and clergy were engrossed by the spectacle, John, disguised in the dress of a common soldier, escaped to Schaffhausen, a place belonging to his friend the duke. Here he revoked his resignation; and hoped, in consequence of the steps he had taken, the council would break up. In fact, much disturbance and confusion did arise; and hun-

dreds of priests and laymen were on the point of returning to their several countries. But next morning the emperor, accompanied by a splendid retinue, with trumpets and kettle drums, rode through the city, bidding the people to be of good courage, since on no account would the council be dissolved. He also gave secret orders to have a paper placarded, which depicted, in strong terms, the conduct of the pope and his cardinals—their bad faith, and their efforts to dissolve the council, or shackle its proceedings.

Three days after the flight of the pope, Gerson, the celebrated chancelor of the university of Paris, proved to the assembly that a general council is superior to the pope; and that, consequently, even in his absence, its decisions are valid. It was, therefore, determined to continue the sessions of the council.

On his own account merely, Pope John is unworthy a single line, or a single moment of the reader's attention. But to show into what hands power had fallen in the days of Huss, we give a brief space more to his history. He was cited to return and appear before the council; but not appearing, his protector, the duke of Austria, was excommunicated, and lost a part of his territory. He finally yielded, and delivered up

the fugitive, who was imprisoned in the same place with Huss. He was ultimately deposed, on the 29th of May, for *seventy crimes, attested by thirty-seven witnesses.* Among these crimes was *malice, tyranny, licentiousness of all kinds, simony, and murder.* After remaining four years in custody, this monster, who, by the way, is said to have been a pirate in early life, bought himself free with the money he had plundered from the church. He paid for his freedom thirty thousand gold guilders. He then went to Italy, threw himself at the feet of his successor, Martin V.; who not only pardoned him, but made him cardinal, bishop of Triscoli, and dean of the college of cardinals. In the midst of his possessions, and with his honors again blooming, he died in November, 1419.

The deposition of John XXIII. excited no feeling of triumph in the breast of Huss. His letters show him neither elated nor desirous of revenge. He had passed into a holier region of thought and feeling. The cause of truth and holiness on earth, and the idea of standing before his Judge in heaven, were all-absorbing topics with him. Of living himself to promote the cause of his Master, he had little hope.

The act of the council in degrading his enemy

breathed no mercy toward him. However desirous of a real reform some might be, it was not to restrict the power of the pope or clergy that the *leaders* had assembled. The schism was weakening their power, and opening the eyes of Europe, and their interest demanded its extinction. But it was equally their interest to silence every tongue, and palsy every hand, that lisped or wrote a sentence against their avarice, their oppressions, and their licentiousness. They had prefaced the sentence of the pope by a decree against Wiclif and his writings. Unfortunately for their fury, he was dead. They could not starve him in a dungeon; they could not torment him in the flame: but they could break open a tomb, and wreak vengeance on a dead body. This they did; they ordered his bones to be dug up and burned. Tradition states, that his bones, when reduced to ashes, were thrown into the river Swift, at Lutterworth. "Thus," says Fuller, "his remains were successively borne into the Severn, St. George's Channel, and the Atlantic—a veritable emblem of his doctrines, which were borne from his province throughout the whole nation; and from his nation through all the kingdoms of the earth."

CHAPTER XIV.

Huss's friends apply again to the emperor for his liberation —Are unsuccessful—They visit him in prison—Affecting interview—He is removed to the castle of Gotleben—Letters to his friends.

In consequence of the flight of the pope and his immediate retainers, the keys of Huss's prison fell into the hands of the emperor. Chlum and his Bohemian friends immediately waited upon Sigismund, and pointed out the present as a favorable opportunity for delivering this innocent man from his sufferings, and clearing his own honor, and that of the empire, from the contempt that had been put upon them. Sigismund listened in embarrassed silence, protesting, finally, that the destiny of the professor was not in his hands, but in that of the four presidents. All the responsibility he would assume was, that they should pay the invalid a short visit in the presence of witnesses. Accompanied by the emperor's attendants, they proceeded to the convent. But what a sigh did they behold! There lay the holy man stretched on a miserable couch, wasted almost to a skeleton. On the ground before him lay a strip of paper, on which was written, in

letters scarcely legible, these affecting words: "If you still love me, entreat the emperor to allow his people to provide for me, or else enable me to find sustenance for myself."

Formerly he had been scantily supplied from the pope's kitchen; but for the last three days he had been entirely neglected. Yet with what forbearance is this cruel neglect represented by this meek-spirited man! At the melancholy sight the bearded warriors were melted into tears. Not having learned, like the sufferer before them, to pray for their enemies, they raised their eyes and besought Heaven to give them, at some future period, an opportunity of avenging with their own swords the wrongs of this injured man.

"The meeting," says the narrator, "was very melancholy, and the parting was still more sad; for all these brave men loved Huss, and their hearts were full of gloomy forebodings." When the sufferer had received the last embrace of his countrymen, he sunk back fainting on his chains. The next day the emperor and council delivered him over to the custody of the bishop of Constance; the man who had formerly deceived him by assurances of a speedy liberation from the pope's sentence of excommunication. By order of the bishop he was

conveyed by water to the castle of Gotleben, at no great distance from the city. Here he was thrown into a tower, where, during the day, he was allowed to move the length of the chain fastened to his feet. At night he was chained by his arms to the wall.

Though there is no evidence that John Huss exulted over the fall of his most powerful enemy, the pope, yet he did exult in the triumph it afforded to the truth. In his letters to his friends he pours forth freely all that was suggested to him by the unveiled crimes of that man. He shows them how the doctrines he had taught them were thus confirmed. "Courage," says he; "you can now give an answer to those preachers who declare that the pope is God on earth—that he can sell the sacraments as the canonists assert —that he is the head and heart of the church, giving it spiritual life—that he is the fountain from which all virtue and excellence issue—that he is the sun of the Holy Ghost, and the sure asylum where all Christians ought to find refuge. Behold, already is this head severed with the sword; already is this terrestrial god bound in chains; already are his sins unveiled: the gushing fountain is dried up; the heavenly sun is dimmed; the heart is torn out that no one may seek an asylum there."

He next refers to the persecution of his corrupt judges. "The council," he said, "has condemned its chief—its proper head—for having sold indulgences, bishoprics, in fact, everything. And yet, among those who have condemned him, are many bishops who are themselves guilty of this shameful traffic. O profligate men! why did you not first pull the beam from your own eye. They have declared the seller to be accursed, and yet themselves are the purchasers. Why did the cardinals elect such a man, and permit him to traffic in holy things? And why did none of them dare to resist him before his flight? Because then they feared him. But when, by God's permission, the secular power seized him, then they conspired together, and determined he should not escape. Such are those spiritual princes, who declare themselves true apostles of Christ—who give themselves the title of the Holy Church, and the most sacred and infallible council. They, however, proved themselves fallible enough when they adored John XXIII., bending the knee before him, kissing his feet, and calling him the Most Holy: and when all the time they knew him to be a murderer, a man of most flagitious life, stained with simony, and a heretic, as their judgment declares. May God for-

give them, for with such knowledge of the man, they named him pope. . . . . And now Christendom is without a head on earth—possesses Jesus Christ alone as chief to direct it—as the heart to give it life—as the fountain to water with the gifts of the Holy Ghost; as the always sufficient refuge, to which I have recourse in my misfortunes. I firmly believe that there I shall always find direction, assistance, and plenteous life; and that God will fill me with ineffable joy, in delivering me from my sins, and from a wretched existence. Happy are they who, in observing his law, perceive and detest the vain pomp, avarice, and hypocrisy of the Saviour's enemies, and patiently wait for the coming of the sovereign Judge and his angels."

CHAPTER XV.

Grief of Jerome for his friend Huss—He goes to Constance—Hears sad news—Is overwhelmed with a sudden panic, and takes to flight—Writes for a safe-conduct—Is summoned before the council—Arrested and brought in in chains—Violence of his enemies—Thrown into prison—Cruelty of the bishop of Riga—His illness.

THE ways of Providence are inscrutable. Reason would have pronounced that Christianity could rise only by the *life* of its founder—by

his going into every nation, to preach and to work miracles: but it rose rather by his *death*. So it was by the *blood* of the martyrs, that the gospel triumphed in the Roman empire. And again, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Europe was prepared to receive the gospel a second time by the same means. It is an affecting consideration, that the sufferings of John Huss in his dungeon at Constance were endured for us. But it was necessary that he should bear testimony to the truth of God; and probably it was alike advantageous to the truth, that *another martyr* should bear testimony to John Huss. The council had at first demanded only one victim—it got two, and the disciple followed the master.

In the public grief caused at Prague by the sufferings of John Huss, one man occupied the place of chief mourner. This was Jerome, his friend and disciple. This man was of a character bold, even to rashness; of vast intelligence, a power of language reaching to the highest eloquence, but often borne away by the vehemence of his passions.

Such were the advantages and defects of this, one of the most eminent men of his time. He had studied in Britain, at Oxford, and at several universities on the continent. Even before

his return to Bohemia, he had signalized himself by the indignation which he manifested against the corruptions of the church. At Vienna he was thrown into prison as a favorer of Wiclif; and being set at liberty at the request of the university of Prague, he came to join John Huss in that city. There he inveighed with vehemence against the pope and the cardinals, and guarded no measures in his opposition to their profligacy. At one time, it is related, in arguing with a monk, and being sharply opposed, he got irritated, and carried his violence so far as to throw his opponent into the Moldau. The monk reached the bank; but says the chronicler very naively, "he found when he touched the land, he had lost the thread of his argument, and was unable to pursue the discussion." Jerome is said to have been superior to Huss in learning and intellectual power. But the latter, by his manner of living, his piety, and mildness, possessed so great an authority, that Jerome always felt its ascendency. John Huss was the master, Jerome the disciple —genius sat in voluntary humility at the feet of virtue.

Jerome, though far superior by his eminent qualities to his contemporaries, belonged by his defects to the age he lived in—an unfortunate

period, when boldness and violence agitated all classes of society. Even the bishops were men of war rather than messengers of peace. One of them, when newly elected to Hildesheim, and requesting to be shown the library of his predecessors, was led into an arsenal, where all kinds of arms were piled up, and told, "Those are the books which they made use of to defend the church. Imitate their example."

Jerome had not at first despaired of his friend's deliverance: he trusted to the honor of the emperor, and the influence of the lords of Bohemia. But when he saw months glide away, and Huss still pining in prison, he began to think seriously of proceeding to Constance. Huss endeavored to keep him at a distance; but when he heard some of his friends calling to mind his words, "Dear master, should any evil befall thee, I will fly to thy aid," he no longer listened to anything but the dictates of courage, friendship, and faith. He set out for Constance without a safe-conduct, and accompanied by a single disciple.

Jerome arrived at that city on the 4th of April, and mingling with the crowd without being known, heard sad intelligence. It was said that John Huss would not be admitted to defend himself before the council—that he would be

condemned in secret—that he would leave his prison only to die. Jerome was filled with grief, and thought all was lost. A violent terror seized him, and he fled as suddenly as he had come. The news of his arrival had already begun to get abroad, and search was made for him in every direction, when it was ascertained that he had departed.

Jerome did not stop until he arrived at Uberlingen. There he bethought him of what he should have remembered before leaving Prague. He wrote to the emperor and to the council for a safe-conduct from each. "I," said he, "*Jerome of Prague*, came to Constance of my own free will, to reply to my adversaries and calumniators, who defame the most illustrious and very celebrated kingdom of Bohemia, and to defend our doctrine, which is pure and orthodox, as well as to prove my innocence in presence of the whole council. . . . To enable me to execute so just a design, I supplicate, in the name of God, your imperial majesty, and the holy council, to grant me a safe-conduct to proceed to Constance, and to withdraw from it in safety."

The emperor refused. The council sent him a document, combining cruelty and sport, but quite useless as a safe-conduct. They say,—"*As we have nothing more at heart than to catch*

the foxes which ravage the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, we summon you to appear before us, as a suspected person, and violently accused of having rashly advanced several errors; and we order you to appear here within a fortnight from the date of this, to answer, as you have offered to do, in the first session after your arrival. . . . . We give you a full safe-conduct, as much as in us lies, *excepting always the claims of the law, and that the orthodox faith does not in any respect prevent it;* certifying to you, whether you appear within the specified period or not, the council by itself, or its commissioners, will proceed against you, as soon as the term shall have elapsed."

This document was no guaranty of safety. Besides, it did not reach Jerome in time, for having waited several days, and heard nothing from emperor or council, he mournfully continued his way toward Bohemia, in despair at having been of no use to his friend, and uneasy at the manner in which his return would be interpreted. He had, however, a document in which seventy nobles from Bohemia gave testimony that he had been to Constance, done all in his power to render reasons for his faith, and had departed because he could not remain in safety.

His crosses and dangers had not increased his prudence. His indignation at the perfidy of the council was perpetually breaking out; and without calculating the consequences, his words followed the impulse of his heart. While passing through a town in the Black Forest, the cure invited him to dine, with several of the clergy. At table his secret indignation again broke forth, and he called the council "a school of the devil, a synagogue of iniquity." Some of the priests were highly offended, and reported him to the officer in command of the town, by whose order he was arrested. Word was sent to the council, who ordered him to Constance.

Jerome entered the city on a cart, loaded with chains, and surrounded by a guard of soldiers. On the 23d of May the cardinals, bishops, and doctors, assembled in the refectory of the Dominicans, and Jerome, in fetters, was led in before them. The summons having been read, and the duke of Bavaria having given an account of his arrest, he was asked why he had not obeyed the order to appear, but had taken to flight? "I withdrew," replied Jerome, "because I had not obtained a safe-conduct; being aware, besides, that I had here a great number of mortal enemies. I never received the sum-

mons from the council. Had I known of it, I should at once have returned, even if I had already reached my own country."

At this reply the assembly rose; noise and confusion ensued, several persons accusing Jerome, and volunteering to give testimony against him. He now paid dearly for the triumphs of his eloquence, for the success which he had formerly obtained in his journeys through Europe, in his debates in the schools. In the university at Paris he had made a brilliant display of his eloquence in dispute with Gerson. He had deeply wounded the self-love of this eminent doctor, who now gave melancholy evidence that intellect and learning are no proof against the influence of malignant passions.

"Jerome," said Gerson, "when you came to Paris, you fancied yourself with your eloquence to be an angel from heaven; you troubled the university by broaching several false propositions in our schools; particularly relative to ideas and general attributes."

"Master Gerson," replied Jerome, "the propositions which I propounded in the university of Paris, and the answers which I gave to the arguments of the masters, were scientifically proved by me as a philosophical thinker, and in my capacity of master in that university. If

I taught errors, prove them to be such, and I will retract them."

A doctor from Cologne interrupted: "When you were at Cologne," said he, "you brought forward several erroneous arguments." "Can you adduce a single one of them?" asked Jerome. At this unexpected question the doctor was disconcerted. "They do not occur to my memory at the moment," said he, "but at a later period they shall be laid before you."

A third, eager to aid in covering him with odium, exclaimed, "You maintained at Heidelberg grave errors relative to the Trinity. You represented it under the figure of a three-cornered shield; and afterward you compared it to water, snow, and ice."

"What I said, and what I represented at Heidelberg," said Jerome, "I am ready to say and to represent again. Prove that what I said were errors, and I will abjure them in all humility, and most sincerely."

A murmur here rose in the assembly, and several voices cried out, "*To the flames with him—to the flames.*"

"If it be your pleasure that I am to die," resumed Jerome, "let the will of God be done." "No, Jerome," said the archbishop of Saltsburg —for there was at least one note of humanity

heard in that bloody assembly—"for it is written, 'I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live.'"

The noise and the vociferations were here redoubled; and, at last, when the tumult was somewhat appeased, Jerome was conducted to prison, and the assembly broke up.

Toward evening, Peter Maldoniewitz, familiarly known as Peter the notary, roamed about the house in which Jerome was confined, and, drawing close to one of the windows, called to Jerome, who, knowing his voice, answered, "Welcome, brother." "Strengthen thy soul," said Peter. "Be mindful of that truth, which thou hadst so often in thy mouth when thou wert at liberty, and thy limbs were free from shackles. My friend, my master, do not fear even to face death for it." "Yes," replied Jerome; "many things have I said concerning the truth, and I will maintain them."

The soldiers interrupted this affecting conversation by repulsing Peter with violence and threats. He mournfully bade farewell to Jerome, and withdrew, his heart filled with grief.

Scarcely had he gone, when a servant of John de Chlum, named Vitus, came up. Just

as he commenced speaking to Jerome, he was seized by the soldiers, and found great difficulty in recovering his liberty.

Jerome was now delivered into the custody of the archbishop of Riga, who, the same night, had him removed to a dungeon of a tower in the cemetery of St. Paul, where he ordered him to be heavily ironed. His chains were riveted to a lofty beam, in such a way that he could not even sit down; while his arms were forced by fetters to cross on his neck behind, so as to oblige him to hold down his head. It is in this cruel position that he is depicted by those persons who actually beheld him. He was kept in that horrid position for two days, living on bread and water, and without his friends from Bohemia being able to ascertain where he was. At last Peter, the notary, learned from one of the keepers the place of his imprisonment, and succeeded in procuring for him permission to have better food.

Jerome soon fell grievously ill, and his tormentors relaxed somewhat their cruel treatment, so that he recovered from his malady, but only to suffer a public and cruel death. His confinement in this dreadful prison lasted an entire year.

CHAPTER XVI.

Severity of Huss's captivity—His humility, constancy, and hope—His enemies wish to dispatch him without a public hearing—Abuse in prison—His judges commence his trial in his absence—Order of the emperor—Brought before the assembly.

THE council of Constance having been long engaged with getting rid of three spiritual tyrants, to make a broader field for a single one, now turned its attention again to John Huss. His case had already been virtually decided. By burning Wiclif's *bones*, they had given fair warning that they intended, unless he would fully recant, to burn the *flesh* of the continuer of Wiclif. Huss, it is true, departed but slightly from the church, except on two points. But those two contained the elements of an entire reformation—they asserted the authority of the SCRIPTURES and of CONSCIENCE against the priesthood. It was determined, therefore, to crush these principles by crushing their advocate; and rarely has any cause found a nobler victim.

No affliction was spared Huss while awaiting his sentence. The arrest of Jerome, his pupil, his fellow-laborer, his bosom friend, had been a

severe shock. The consolation of an incarceration in the same prison was refused them; and while Jerome languished in chains, in the tower, Huss remained at Gotleben, under the guard of the bishop of Constance. He continued to evince the most sincere piety, the most constant courage, and the deepest humility. His mind was evidently under the direct influence of the divine Spirit. He was inspired with strong hopes, that though he should be called away from his work by a violent death, the truth would eventually triumph. Already, when driven from Prague, and wandering about in the villages of Bohemia, he used to say to the crowds that followed him, "The wicked, with their ecclesiastical censures and citations, have caught the *poor bird** in their nets. But if this domestic and peaceful animal, whose flight is not lofty, has broken through their snares, how much more will they be torn asunder by others who soar aloft? In place of a feeble bird, the truth has sent forth keen-sighted and high-flying eagles, that will gain over many to Jesus Christ, who will furnish them with strength."

He had also cheering visions and dreams. One night, in his dungeon, it seemed to him

* *Huss*, in Bohemian, a "*goose*."

that the priests wanted to efface the figures of Jesus Christ, which he had got painted on the walls of his chapel at Bethlehem. "The next day," said he, "methought I perceived several painters busied in retracing those pictures of the Saviour, so as to make them more numerous and more brilliant than before; and as they did so, they were crying out, 'Now let the bishops and the priests come forth! Let them efface these if they can!' and the crowd was filled with joy, and I also."

"Occupy your thoughts with your defense, rather than with visions," said John de Chlum. Huss, in reply, quoted the text which cautions against trusting in dreams: "and yet," said he, "I firmly hope that the life of Christ, which I engraved in men's hearts at Bethlehem, when I preached his word, will never be effaced; and that, after I have ceased to live, it will be still better shown forth by mightier preachers, to the great satisfaction of the people, and to my most sincere joy, when I shall again be permitted to announce his gospel—that is, when I shall rise from the dead. . . . As to my defense, I intrust it to the Saviour. To him I appealed before the commissioners, saying, 'Let the Lord, who shall soon judge you all, be my Advocate and my Judge. To him do I

confide my cause, as he confided his own to his Father.' It is he who has said, 'Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.'"

The day of his trial, however, was not to be yet. His envenomed enemies, particularly Paletz and Causis, dreaded the influence of his eloquence. Perhaps, also, they knew so little of his true spirit as to fear a recantation would rob them of their victim. They had found that a heretic might be refused an advocate; and it would be equally easy to condemn him without a public hearing. The emperor, too, had many reasons for dreading a public trial. The burning disgrace of violating his honor, and that of the empire, could not be forgotten.

But the barons of Bohemia, and particularly the high-souled John de Chlum, renewed their energetic remonstrances with the council and the emperor. "The intention," said they to the council, "is to condemn John Huss on mutilated passages of his works, and erroneously interpreted by his most deadly enemies, and in direct violation of the emperor's safe-conduct." They pleaded, "that he might be brought from his cruel prison, that he might

gain health and strength to prepare for his examination." They pledged themselves, also, to give whatever guaranties and security they might demand, that he would not withdraw, but fully meet all questions that might be put to him.

They also sent a similar letter to the emperor; and they further appealed to the certificates of orthodoxy delivered to him at Prague; and also presented the following protest from himself:—

"Anxious, above all things, for the honor of God, and of the holy church; and being most desirous of remaining a faithful member of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head and spouse of the church which he has redeemed, I do hereby protest, as I have before done, that I have never obstinately sustained, or shall sustain, what is contrary to the truth. I have always believed, I still believe, and I desire ever hereafter firmly to believe, all the truths that ought to be admitted. And before I take on me to maintain any error contrary to this, may I, with a hope in the Lord, and in his assistance, undergo death. I am therefore ready, with the help of God, to expose my miserable life for the law of Christ, which I believe to have been literally given us by the inspiration

of the Holy Trinity, and promulgated by the saints of God, for the salvation of mankind. I believe in the articles of the divine law, as the Trinity teaches them to us, and orders us to believe them. In my thesis, my answers, and my public actions, I have always been, am, and shall be, subject to the teachings of that holy law. I am fully prepared to revoke all that I can have said contrary to the truth."

The patriarch of Antioch replied, in the name of the council, that the result would show whether John Huss's protest was imposture or truth —that with respect to the guaranties or security, which the barons were ready to give for him, were a thousand presented, they could not, in conscience, receive them from a heretic. They could, however, promise that, on the 5th of June, Huss should be taken from Gotleben, and brought to Constance, to be publicly interrogated.

This last determination should be attributed to the emperor, who gave the same assurance, with his own lips, to the barons of Bohemia. John de Chlum, full of hope, hastened from the emperor to write in the following terms to Huss :—

"Beloved brother in Christ, learn that it has been resolved, between the emperor and the

deputies of the nations, that you shall have a public hearing. Your friends insist on your being removed to an airy and wholesome residence, that you may, to a certain degree, recover your tranquillity, and have some relaxation. Therefore, in God's name, and for the sake of the truth, take good care not to desert the holy cause through any fear of losing this wretched life, for it is for your great benefit that God visits you by this trial."

Huss's enemies now endeavored to prevent him from being allowed the promised hearing. They spread abroad a report, that sedition was to burst forth on his arrival. They persuaded the council to send deputies to his prison to question him, hoping something might be drawn out of him that would enable them to evade the public audience. In the secret interview every means was tried—even to insult and violence—to shake his firmness; and his friends were not without disquietude as to the result. Huss soon set their minds at rest, in a letter, which shows, at once, his steadfastness and the cruelty of his inquisitors. "Let my friends," says he, "be under no alarm respecting my answers. *I firmly hope that the matters which I have uttered in the shade will be hereafter preached on the house-tops.* Every one of the articles of

accusation has been presented to me separately, and the question asked, whether I persisted in desiring to defend it? My answer was, that I would not do so, but await the decision of the council. God is my witness, that no reply has appeared to me more suitable, since I gave it under my own hand, that I did not wish to maintain anything obstinately, but was disposed to let myself be instructed by any one. Michael Causis stood by, with a paper in his hand, urging the patriarch to use force to make me reply to his questions. The bishops then came, and interrogated in their turn. . . . God has permitted Paletz and Causis to rise against me for my sins. Paletz examined and remarked upon all my letters; and the second brought forward conversations that had taken place between us many years back. . . . The patriarch would insist on it that I was very rich;* and an archbishop named the very sum—namely, seventy thousand gold florins. . . . O, certainly, my sufferings to-day were great. One of the bishops said to me, 'You have established a new law;' and another, 'You have preached up all those articles.' My answer simply

* Several letters, in which Huss prays his friends to pay for him some trifling debts, prove that he was very poor.

was, 'Why do you overwhelm me with outrage?'"

At last, on the 5th of June, Huss was removed from the castle of Gotleben to the monastery of the Franciscans, where he remained in irons until his death. Here assembled almost the entire council. They proceeded to have the articles of accusation read while Huss stood chained in another room!

The good notary Peter, being there, ran immediately to John de Chlum and Wenceslaus Duba:—"John Huss," said he to them, "is going to be condemned before having been heard." They immediately informed the emperor, who on the instant sent two officers, ordering the council to suspend the inquiry in the absence of Huss, and to send him the articles of accusation. The assembly obeyed the first, ordering Huss to be brought before them; but refused to send the articles to the emperor.

CHAPTER XVII.

Disgraceful scene in the council—Charges against Huss, and his replies—Cardinal of Cambray—John de Chlum—The emperor.

Huss now stood before the assembly in fetters. His books were presented, and he was asked whether he confessed them as his productions. Having examined them, he answered: "I acknowledge them to be mine, and if any man among you can point out any mistaken proposition in them, I will rectify it with the most hearty good will."

The reading of the articles then commenced. One having been read, and the names of some witnesses who supported the charges mentioned, Huss proceeded to reply. But he had scarcely uttered a word when there burst forth throughout the whole assembly so furious a clamor, that it was impossible to understand a word he said. "The shouts," says Peter Maldoniewitz, "were so great, that one might have imagined himself to be rather among wild beasts, than in a peaceable assembly of learned men." When the tumult had somewhat subsided, Huss made an appeal to the Holy Scriptures. This occasioned another general outcry. "That is not the

question," was the general cry. Some then accused, while others laughed him to scorn. Huss made no attempt to speak amid this uproar, and his enemies began to triumph. "He is dumb." cried they, "it is evident he has taught the heretical proposition." "All," said Luther, in his own energetic style, "all worked themselves into rage like wild boars—the bristles of their backs stood up; they bent their brows and gnashed their teeth against John Huss."

Huss, in the utmost astonishment, but perfectly motionless, sadly turned his eyes round on the assembly; and where he should have found judges, he found only enemies. "I anticipated," said he, "a different reception; I had imagined I should obtain a hearing. I am unable to make myself heard amid so great a noise, and am silent because I am forced to be. I would willingly speak were I listened to."

Finding themselves unable to agree what was to be done, the assembly broke up. The Bohemian noblemen gave the emperor an account of the proceedings, and entreated him to be present at the next meeting to maintain order. He promised to do so, and on the 7th of June the next audience took place. Huss was led in by a numerous body of soldiers.

The emperor was present, and no one had

a more painful part to play on the occasion than himself. He saw directly in front of him, loaded with chains, that same John Huss for whose safety he had pledged his word, and the honor of the empire. He came with the hope of saving Huss, by inducing him to recant. But vain was that hope. Huss would not bring the least stain upon his conscience to save his life, and his judges seemed to have imbibed the very spirit of Paletz and Causis. But the light of kindness did beam upon John Huss from some eyes, even in that assembly. Peter, the notary, whose love no peril could intimidate, was there; and so was Wenceslaus Duba and John de Chlum.

Michael Causis commenced by reading the first act of accusation. It was that Huss had asserted, that after the consecration of the elements in the eucharist the bread remained material; or, in other words, was bread still. It would have been much to the credit of the reformer if this accusation had been well founded, but nothing could be more false. Huss was a firm believer in the senseless dogma of transubstantiation to the day of his death. He declared most sincerely, that he believed the identical body of Christ was really and truly in the sacramental wafer. After a long time had been spent on this

senseless question, the second article was read. It charged Huss with maintaining Wiclif's opinions. This charge was unjust except on three points. These were, the *infallibility* of the decisions of the church, whether *conformable* to the *Scriptures* or *opposed* to them—the *spiritual authority of priests, whether holy or infamous*—and lastly, *their right to the immense riches they had acquired, and the tithes, whatever use they made of them.* Huss declared that tithes were alms, and could be rightfully withdrawn from the priests, if they made a bad use of them. Most of the other dogmas of the Church of Rome, against which Wiclif had written, he admitted, but blamed their *abuse.*

When, therefore, his accusers urged it as a heinous offense against Huss, that he had opposed the condemnation of Wiclif's writings, he replied, "I refused to recognize as false and scandalous all the articles extracted from Wiclif, because I hold several of them to be true." He added, that he had not approved of the condemnation of Wiclif's articles, because it was not pronounced according to reasons drawn from the *Holy Scriptures.* Several members then accused him of having expressed a doubt of Wiclif's damnation, at the time his books were burned. He replied: "These were my words;

'I cannot affirm if Wiclif will be saved or lost; I would willingly, however, have my soul where his is.'" A noble answer, worthy of the highest admiration; but it was greeted by the assembly with an insulting roar of laughter.

Accused of having asserted that a priest living in mortal sin does not validly baptize or consecrate, he said he had modified that article in one of his books by saying, "Such a priest baptized unworthily." The book showed this to be correct.

Accused of having appealed from Popes Martin and John to Jesus Christ, he declared:— "No appeal can be more just or more holy. Is it not according to law, to appeal from an inferior judge to a higher and more enlightened one? But what judge can be superior to Christ? Is there in any one more justice than in him, in whom neither error nor falsity can be found? Is there anywhere a more assured refuge for the wretched and oppressed?"

While John Huss thus answered in a grave, yet earnest tone, he was overwhelmed with mockery and insult. His appeal to Jesus Christ appeared to arouse the whole host of dire passions in these wicked men.

Accused of having called on the people in his sermons to take up arms in defense of his

doctrines: "Yes," said he, "I certainly did invite the people to arm themselves to support the truth of the gospel; but only with the arms spoken of by the apostle—the helmet and sword of salvation."

Accused of having ruined the university of Prague, in the affair of the three votes taken from the Germans, and made responsible for that event, by a doctor named Nason; he replied, that he had acted in that matter according to justice—for the interest of his countrymen—and in obedience to the king's orders.

Accused, by this same Nason, of having caused sentences of banishment to be pronounced against a great number of learned men, removed to Moravia by Wenceslaus:—"How could I have done that," said he, "as they were banished when I was not at Prague?"

John Huss was then given over to the keeping of the archbishop of Riga, who had so cruelly treated his friend Jerome. As the soldiers were leading him away, the cardinal of Cambray called him back to appear before the emperor. "John Huss," said the cardinal, "I have heard you affirm that if you had not come to Constance of your own free will, neither the emperor nor the king of Bohemia could have forced you to do so." "Reverend father,"

replied Huss, "what I said was, that there were many noble lords in Bohemia who wished me well; and that they could have kept me and concealed me in such a manner that no person could have constrained me to come to Constance, not even the king of Bohemia or the emperor himself." At this the cardinal grew crimson with anger, and exclaimed, "Do you hear the audacity of this man?"

The assembly murmured, and a commotion arose, when John de Chlum resolutely stood forward and dared to defy the emperor himself, in order to succor his friend: "John Huss," said he, "has spoken well. I am but an insignificant person in Bohemia, compared with many others; and yet, if I had undertaken it, I should engage to defend him for a year against these great sovereigns. What, therefore, would they have done who are far more powerful than I, and who possess impregnable fortresses?"

"Enough has been said," replied the cardinal. "As to you, John Huss, I exhort you to submit to the sentence of the council, as you have promised to do. Do so, I recommend you, and your person and your honor will fare well."

The emperor himself endeavored to move John Huss; but from the very first words he uttered, it was easy to perceive the secret trouble

which agitated him. "Several persons," said he, "pretend that you had been in prison a fortnight, when you received my safe-conduct. But I allow, and many are aware of the fact, that this safe-conduct was granted before your departure from Prague. I guarantied you the liberty of explaining frankly before the council, as you have just done, your doctrines and your faith; and we have to thank the cardinals and the bishops for the indulgence with which they have heard you. But as we are assured that it is not allowable for us to defend a man suspected of heresy, we give you the same advice as the cardinal of Cambray. Submit yourself, therefore, and we shall take care that you shall withdraw in peace, after having undergone a moderate correction. Should you refuse, you will furnish the council with arms against yourself. And as to me, be certain that I would sooner burn you with my own hands, than any longer put up with this stubbornness, of which you have given so many proofs. Our counsel to you is, that you unreservedly submit to the authority of the council."

"Magnanimous emperor," replied Huss, "I shall first of all return thanks to your majesty for the safe-conduct which you gave me."

Dreading what was to follow such an exor

dium, John de Chlum interrupted his friend, and said, "Confine yourself to offering a justification for the stubbornness of which the emperor accuses you."

Huss then repeated, with mildness, his usual defense, saying, "I did not come here, excellent prince, with the intention of defending anything with stubbornness. God is witness to the truth of what I assert. Let anything better or more holy than what I have taught be shown me, and I am perfectly ready to retract."

At these words he was led away by the soldiers, and the sitting was at an end. His ever-faithful friend held out his hand at parting, and said, "Noble professor, sacrifice thy life sooner than abandon the truth." Huss, with a tearful eye, smiled assent.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Third and last audience of Huss previous to his condemnation—His firmness and intrepidity—Requisitions of the council—Bitter words of the emperor—Huss led back to prison exhausted, and scarcely able to stand—His gratitude to John de Chlum.

At the third audience John Huss had to reply, first, to a series of charges taken from his treatise *On the Church*. Six and twenty articles were presented as taken from this book, and as being all stained with heresy or error. They may all be classed under two heads—predestination, and the power of the pope and priesthood. Huss, with many Romanists and Protestants, appears to have embraced predestination; and this was one of the grave crimes to which he was to answer with his blood. It is unnecessary to give these twenty-six charges in detail. Three or four specimens will be quite sufficient.

One was, that "no *human* election, or *external* dignity, makes a man a member of the holy Catholic Church." "St. Peter neither was, nor is, the *head* of the holy Catholic Church." "No heretic, after being censured by the church, ought to be abandoned to the

secular power to be punished." "The people ought not to be laid under an interdict, because Jesus Christ himself did not lay the Jews under one, on account of the persecutions which he underwent himself." "The power of the pope, as vicar of Jesus Christ, is null, if the pope's life and morals are not in conformity to those of Jesus Christ and St. Peter." Such is a fair specimen of the charges brought against John Huss, from his book *On the Church*.

With respect to the cruel doctrine relating to heretics, he manifested indecision, though he saw himself on the point of experiencing its utmost rigor. He had, indeed, the most awful reverence for the truth of God, and fully and properly believed that those who corrupted that truth were guilty of the most daring wickedness, and deserving of the sorest punishment. But still he hesitated whether a *real heretic* should be punished by man, or left to the just judgment of God. At last he said, on this point, "The heretic cannot be punished by man until after he has been charitably instructed by means of arguments drawn from the Holy Scriptures."

While he was still speaking on this subject, one of his judges reproached him with having compared those who deliver over unconvinced heretics to the secular power to be punished, to

the Pharisees who delivered up Jesus to Pilate. On this a great tumult arose among the cardinals and bishops. "Whom do you compare to the Pharisees?" cried they.

"Those," replied Huss, "who hand over an innocent man to the secular sword, as the scribes and Pharisees gave up Jesus to Pilate."

"Truly," said the cardinal of Cambray, "they who extracted these articles showed great moderation; for there are in the writings of this man things far more horrible and detestable."

The assembly next proceeded to consider articles drawn from the book, written by Huss in reply to the attacks by Paletz. These charges, seven in number, were but a repetition of the former ones. In his reply to Paletz, Huss had, in very forcible language, inveighed against giving the title of "*most holy*" to an unholy pope. He had repeated, after Wiclif, what he had so often asserted, "If a pope, bishop, or prelate, be in mortal sin, he is neither pope, bishop, nor prelate." He quoted, in favor of this assertion, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and others, all of whom affirm, that a man in mortal sin is not a Christian, much less pope or bishop. "It was to guilty men like these," said Huss, "that the prophet referred when he said, 'They have

reigned, but not by me; they have been princes, but I never knew them.' I have allowed, however, with those fathers, that though a wicked priest be an unworthy minister of the sacraments, God, however, baptizes, &c., by his ministry. I will, however, go still further, and declare, that a king in mortal sin is not worthily a king before God. This may be seen by the divine judgment pronounced by Samuel on Saul: 'Since thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.'"

During this energetic reply the emperor was conversing in a low voice, in the embrasure of a window, with the elector palatine and the burgrave of Nuremburg, and was overheard to say, "There never was a more dangerous heretic." He called on Huss to repeat his last assertion, and Huss having done so, with some restriction or explanation, the emperor, by an effort, restrained himself, merely saying, "No person is exempt from sin."

Irritated by so much intrepidity, the cardinal of Cambray exclaimed, "What, are you not satisfied with endeavoring to shake the whole church with your doctrine, but you must also attack kings?"

Paletz joined the cardinal; and after attempt-

ing to explain the words of Samuel to Saul, he said, "A pope can be truly a pope, and a king truly a king, and yet not be a Christian."

"If John XXIII. was a true pope," retorted Huss, "why have you deposed him?"

Six articles, taken from a treatise addressed by John Huss to his old master, Znoima, were next produced. The principal were,—"1. That there is no necessity for the church to have a visible head to direct spiritual matters. 2. The apostles and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ governed the church well enough before the office of pope was introduced, and could do so until the day of judgment if there were no pope in existence. 3. Jesus is *alone* the head of the church, and quickens it by his Spirit, &c. 4. The church subsisted without a head, and lived in the grace of Jesus Christ, from the time of Agnes,* for a space of two years and five months. Could it not remain so for a longer time? Jesus Christ would govern it better by his true disciples, who are scattered through the world, than by such monstrous heads as these."

When Huss repeated these last words, the fathers shook their heads disdainfully, and a voice cried out, "Do you hear him? he is acting the prophet."

* Pope Joan.

"Yes," replied he, with animation, "I affirm that the church was much better governed in the times of the apostles than it is at present. And what is there to prevent Jesus Christ from governing it at present without these monstrous chiefs? But why do I ask the question? The church is at this moment without a visible head, and yet Jesus Christ does not cease to govern it."

The reading of the articles, and taking testimony, were now ended; and to what did they amount? Why, the very charges form, for John Huss, the highest eulogy. He loved the Scriptures—he dared to lift up his voice against the extreme profligacy of a corrupt and corrupting priesthood. These were his crimes; and for such crimes the cardinal of Cambray thus addressed him in the name of the council:—

"You have heard how many atrocious crimes you are accused of. Reflect now, and make your choice; if you submit with humility to the decision of the council, we shall act toward you with humanity, particularly on account of the most gracious emperor here present, and of the king of Bohemia, his brother. But if, contrary to the feeling of so many wise and illustrious men, you determine to defend some

of the articles which have just now been read, you will do it at your own great peril."

Huss having replied in a mild and submissive tone, that he only asked to be instructed, the cardinal went on to say, "The council requires three things—first, that you humbly confess that you have erred in all these articles that have been laid to your charge; next, that you swear never to teach them more; and, lastly, that you abjure them publicly."

One cannot read the above without *surprise*, *sorrow*, and *indignation*. *Surprise*, that in a council professedly representing the Christian church throughout Europe, there should scarcely be found virtue or humanity—that such a council should require John Huss to commit the foulest perjury, by acknowledging he had taught doctrines which he never taught—deny Jesus Christ as the head of his own church—deny the sufficiency of the inspired Scriptures—acknowledge men guilty of avarice, cruelty, simony, adultery, and murder, to be true ministers of the holy gospel, and God's vicegerents on earth; *sorrow*, that human nature could evince so much depravity; and *indignation* at such an outrage upon truth, virtue, and decency.

"Who would not blush and hang his head
To own himself a man?"

Several members having joined with the cardinal of Cambray, and exhorted John Huss to comply with the infamous demand, he gave the following most admirable reply:—

"I repeat to you, that I am ready to receive with submission the instructions of the council. But in the name of Him who is the God of all of us in common, I pray and conjure you not to constrain me to do what my conscience forbids me—what I cannot do but at the peril of my eternal salvation; do not force me to abjure all those articles brought against me. I have read in the Catholic doctrine, that to *abjure* is to renounce errors which one has ascertained. As I have never either admitted or taught several of those errors, how can I conscientiously abjure them? But as to those which I have acknowledged and avowed, if any one can teach me better doctrine, I will most readily do what you require of me."

These dignified and touching words were lost upon the assembly. The emperor replied,—"What can you fear in abjuring all these articles? For my part, I have no hesitation in disavowing all kinds of errors; but does it follow that I have entertained them?"

"Excellent prince," said Huss, "to *disavow* is not the same thing as to *abjure*."

"You shall have submitted to you," said the cardinal of Florence, "a form of abjuration easy to sanction. Will you obey?"

John Huss repeated his previous answer.

"You are old enough to see what is right," said the emperor; "and you ought to comprehend me when I tell you, that if you are wise, you will submit to all that is required of you; if not, you will be sentenced according to the law of the council."

"That law is clear enough," said an aged bishop of Poland; "it is the law which inflicts the punishment due to heresy."

John Huss, for the third time, replied as he had done before.

A priest then rose, and said, "John Huss ought not to be permitted to retract his opinions, for his oath cannot be trusted, he having declared, when writing to his friends, 'If my tongue swore, my heart would take no oath.'"

"That is false—is altogether calumnious,"—rejoined Huss; "and I protest, solemnly, that my conscience does not reproach me with any error."

Paletz next returned to the charge, and accused John Huss anew of having publicly approbated several of Wiclif's doctrines. He also denounced him for having pronounced the

funeral eulogium on certain rioters, as he called them, who had been beheaded during the troubles in Prague.

Huss did not deny this double accusation.

Paletz then rose, and cried out, "I call God to witness, in the presence of the emperor and the sacred council, that I have said nothing here through hatred to John Huss, nor through any malevolent feeling; and that I have not set myself up as the adversary of so many errors, but through zeal for the Catholic Church." Michael Causis repeated the same oath. Huss looked earnestly at both, and said, "To God I leave that point."

The firmness of John Huss had irritated the emperor; he also wished to still the reproaches of conscience, by persuading himself that the man he had so deeply injured was really a pestilent heretic, deserving of no better treatment. He admitted the doctrines of the council, that heretics were to be punished by the civil arm; and thus anger and superstition stifled the voice of humanity.

"You have heard," said he, addressing the assembly, "the errors which this man has taught—many of which are crimes deserving the severest punishment. My opinion, therefore, is, that unless he abjures every one of

them he ought to be burned to death. . . . If any of his followers should happen to be at Constance, they also ought to be severely put down; and chiefly among them all, his disciple Jerome."

"Yes, yes," cried several voices; "the master being punished, the pupil will be found more tractable."

With these words the assembly broke up; and John Huss was conducted back to prison.

When he arrived there he could scarcely stand. He was overcome with illness and the fatigue of so lengthened an examination. The faithful John de Chlum followed to give him sympathy and encouragement. "O," said Huss, in one of his letters, "what a consolation was it to me, in the midst of my trials, to see that excellent nobleman, John de Chlum, stretch forth the hand to me, miserable heretic, languishing in chains, and already condemned by every one."

Of the emperor he wrote: "He condemned me even before my enemies. O, had he only acted like even Pilate, who heard both accusation and defense, and then said, 'I find no fault in him:' or had he said, 'I have given him a safe-conduct; if he will not submit to you, I will send him to Bohemia, and inform the king

of your judgment, that he may be punished by his own lawful sovereign.' When I trusted to his word, I thought he was serious in it; but, alas! I now find that he had but little regard for the law of God or his own plighted faith."

CHAPTER XIX.

Efforts made by the council to induce John Huss to retract —Letters to his friends—Forgiveness of enemies—Interview with Paletz—Dilemma of the emperor—Sends four bishops with Chlum and Duba to induce Huss to retract—Enemies exhorting him to life—Friends calling upon him to remain steadfast and die.

A FORM of retraction had been drawn up by order of the council, and was sent the next day to John Huss by Cardinal Viviers, the president. It was couched in the following artful terms:—

"I, John Huss, in addition to the protestations which I have made, *and all of which I adhere to*, do hereby protest anew, that although several things are imputed to me that I never thought of, I submit myself, with all humility, to the merciful orders and correction of the sacred council, touching all things that have been objected or imputed to me, or drawn from my books; or, in fine, proved by the deposition

of witnesses—in order to abjure, rebuke, and retract them, and to undergo the merciful penance imposed by the council, and generally to do all that its goodness shall judge necessary for my salvation—recommending myself to its pity with an entire submission."

The true character of John Huss then displayed itself. Several had died before him in defense of new doctrines, which they had themselves brought before the world. And perhaps the stimulus of self-love had contributed to their firmness. But John Huss had proclaimed no new dogma. His only crime was, that he proclaimed the supreme authority of the Scriptures, and opposed the corruptions of the clergy. His self-love, therefore, had no interest in his constancy. He offered himself to death for the love he bore to virtue and to truth. He contended, therefore, from the purest motives; and, in his struggle, he towered aloft, and became a beacon light in the eyes of his own, and every succeeding age.

"I cannot sign this form," said he; "first, because I am called upon to condemn as impious several propositions which I hold to be true; and next, because I should thereby become a scandal to the people of God, to whom I have taught those truths."

A man, supposed by some to be Cardinal de Viers, but by others, with better reason, a Polish doctor, named John Cardinal, a friend of Huss, strongly urged him to comply with the demands of the council.

Huss replied, "Ought I, through fear of a temporary punishment, to transgress the law of God by so great a sin as perjury? Most certainly I should far prefer being put to death. And as I have appealed to Jesus Christ, the almighty Judge, I shall abide by his sentence. I am well persuaded that he will not decide on false testimony, or according to councils subject to error, but according to truth."

Moved by seeing one so near a horrid death, evincing so pure, so firm, and so exalted a state of mind, his friend replied, "I cannot help thee; I cannot condemn thee. May God strengthen thee!"

Huss persevered to the end in the same purpose. He never affirmed that his writings were exempt from error; but he refused to acknowledge with his lips any of them to be false before he felt it to be so in his judgment and conscience.

Alarmed, at length, at the impression that would follow the capital punishment of a man so celebrated, and whose life presented such a

contrast to the lives of the greater number of his judges, the cardinals and bishops spared no effort to induce him to retract. "The council," remarked several of them, "is the supreme arbiter in cases of conscience. If the act which it demands is a perjury, it alone will be responsible in the sight of God."

Huss did not allow the council to usurp the place of God, as supreme arbiter, over his conscience. He declared that the author of a book ought to know better than any one else whether he had taught the doctrines imputed to him; and he maintained his own individual accountability to God. The council, like the pope, pretended to be infallible, and would fain have taken his conscience into their safe keeping. One inflexible doctor went so far as to make use of the following strange argument: "Even supposing," said he, "that the council were to affirm that you had *only one eye*, when you have in reality *two*, you would be obliged to agree with it in its assertion."

"As long as God shall preserve my reason," said John Huss, "I shall take good care not to say any such thing—no, not if the whole universe should endeavor to force me to it."

From this time John Huss had no other thought than to prepare for death, and mitigate

for his friends the cruel separation about to take place, by fortifying their confidence and hope in God. With this view he wrote the following excellent letter to his friends in Bohemia:—

"Beloved, I conjure you to obey God, to glorify his holy word, to adhere constantly to his truth, which I have spoken to you in my writings and oral instructions. I pray you, that if any one of you has heard a word fall from me which appears contrary to truth, that he will at once reject it. I beseech, whatever person may have observed any levity in my words or acts, not to imitate me in that, but to pray God to pardon me. I conjure you to love and respect all priests who live a moral life; and to honor those in particular who suffer for the love of God. I pray you to offer thanks to the worthy barons of Bohemia, Moravia, and Poland, who came forward as the defenders of the truth in my case; and who struggled courageously against the whole council for my deliverance, and particularly to Wenceslaus Duba and John de Chlum. Believe whatever they shall tell you of me. I write this in my prison, and with *my fettered hand, expecting my sentence of death to-morrow; but with a full and entire confidence that God will not abandon me—that he will not*

permit me to outrage his holy truth, by confessing what false witnesses have wickedly alledged against me. When, with the assistance of Jesus Christ, we shall again meet in the delicious peace of the future life, you will learn how *merciful God has shown himself toward me; how effectually he has supported me in the midst of my temptations and trials.* I know nothing of Jerome, my faithful and well-beloved disciple, unless that he too is held in cruel chains, awaiting death like me, on account of his faith. Alas! it is by our own countrymen, by natives of Bohemia, our implacable adversaries, that we have been both delivered into the hands of our enemies. I ASK FOR THEM YOUR PRAYERS. Remain, I conjure you, attached to my chapel at Bethlehem; and use all your endeavors to have the gospel preached there as long as God will permit. Love ye one another. Never turn any one aside from the divine truth; and watch that the good be not oppressed with violence."

We have already seen how John Huss astonished and baffled the great council by his firmness. In this, and many other of his letters, we perceive how he united to the intrepidity of a heroic heart all the tenderness of a Christian disposition. No remembrance was more

cutting than that of his friendship having been betrayed. To strengthen himself under this painful trial, in another letter he called to mind the prediction of our Saviour: "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." "Alas!" said he, "the wounds which we receive from those persons in whom our soul had placed its hope are most cruel. To the sufferings of the body are joined the pangs of betrayed friendship. In my case it is from *Paletz* that my most profound affliction proceeds."

The poignancy of such grief must be experienced to enable us fully to comprehend to what an extent John Huss carried his forgiveness of injuries and his humility. Many have when dying pardoned their enemies. Huss is perhaps the only person who has chosen as his confessor in death the person to whom he had in all the world most to forgive. "Paletz," said he, "is my greatest adversary; it is to him that I wish to confess myself." This request was refused, and the bishop sent him a monk, of whom he speaks well, and who recommended him to submit to the council.

Paletz when applied to refused: he had re-

coiled from the painful task which the humility of Huss had imposed upon him. He was, however, vanquished by such greatness of soul, and determined to visit his victim.

When Huss saw him he addressed him in a mild and melancholy tone:—"Paletz," said he, "I uttered some expressions before the council that were calculated to offend you—pardon me."

Paletz was much affected, and begged Huss to abjure. "I conjure you," said he, "do not look to the shame of a retraction, but only to the good that must result from it."

"Is not the opprobrium of the condemnation and punishment greater in the eyes of men than that of the abjuration?" replied Huss. "How then can you suppose it is a false shame which prevents me? But I put the question to yourself. If errors were *falsely* imputed to you, what would be your course? Would you abjure them?"

"That would certainly be hard," said Paletz, and he shed tears.

"Is it possible," rejoined Huss, "that you who are now in this state before me could have said in full council, when pointing to me, 'That man does not believe in God.'"

Paletz denied it. "You said so, however," repeated Huss, "and in addition, you declared, that 'since the birth of Christ, there never was

seen a more dangerous heretic.' Ah Paletz! Paletz! why have you wrought me so much ill?" Paletz's only reply was another exhortation to submit. He then withdrew, weeping bitterly.

Among those who exerted themselves to persuade Huss to recant, none showed more anxiety than the emperor. When his first burst of passion was over, and when he had gotten beyond the infectious atmosphere of the council, he could not avoid turning his thoughts inwardly—he could not forget that John Huss had come to the council on his word and safeguard. And he feared, in delivering him up to the flames, not only the secret reproaches of conscience, but also the cry of the indignant public. But what could he do? He had already abandoned him to his enemies; he had already condemned him before the council with his own lips. To rescue him now would raise up against himself a host of most formidable enemies, and rob him of his glory as defender of the faith. The recantation of John Huss, and that alone, could free him from his difficulties. To effect this, therefore, he spared neither prayers, nor persuasions, nor threats. All were in vain—his efforts only inspired John Huss with a melancholy pity. "Place not confidence in the

princes of the earth," wrote he to his Bohemian friends: and on another occasion he said, "Truly did they say, that Sigismund would himself deliver me up to my enemies;—he has done more, he has condemned me before them."

John Huss, by his firmness, forced the emperor to suffer the disgrace he so earnestly sought to avoid, by taking from him the power to rescue him from the funeral pile.

It is worthy of remark, and a striking proof of the justice of his cause, that while his enemies, as if alarmed at their triumph, were calling upon him to live, by escaping from the sentence they had pronounced against him, his friends were exhorting him to persevere and die. The emperor, in hopes that their wishes would coincide with his own, prayed John de Chlum and Wenceslaus Duba to accompany four bishops, whom he had charged with the task of persuading John Huss to submit. He hoped Huss would listen to these friends. They repaired to the refectory of the Franciscans, where Huss was brought before them. John de Chlum first addressed him:—

"Dear master," said he, "I am not a learned man, and I deem myself unable to aid you by my counsels. You must therefore decide yourself on the course you have to adopt, and deter-

mine whether you are guilty or not of those crimes of which the council accuse you. If you are convinced of error, have no hesitation; be not ashamed to yield. But if in your conscience you feel yourself to be innocent, beware of committing perjury in the sight of God, and of leaving the path of truth through any fear of death."

Huss was much affected, and replied, in tears: "Generous lord! O my noble friend! I call the almighty God to witness, that if I was aware of having taught, or written anything contrary to the law, or orthodox doctrine of the church, I would retract with the utmost readiness. And even at the present time I desire most vehemently to be better instructed in sacred truth. If, therefore, any one will teach me a better doctrine than I have inculcated, let him do it. I am ready to hear him; and, abandoning my own, I will fervently embrace the other."

"Do you believe yourself," said one of the bishops, "to be wiser than the whole council?"

"I conjure you, in the name of the all-powerful God," replied Huss, "to give me as an instructor, *in the divine Word*, the least person in the council; and I will subscribe to what he says, and in such a manner as that the council will be satisfied."

"See," was the reply, "how stubborn he is in his heresy." They withdrew, and John Huss was, by their orders, again consigned to his dungeon.

John de Chlum remained, and kneeling by Huss, took the right hand of his friend, and, laying it on his own head, thus silently begged his blessing. From this time forth he never ceased exhorting and consoling his dear friend. Huss expressed a desire, that he would extend his friendship to the point of witnessing his death.

"O thou, the kindest and most faithful friend!" said he, "may God grant thee a fitting recompense. I conjure thee to grant me this still—not to depart until thou hast seen the last. Would to God that I could be at once led to the stake before thy face, rather than be worn away in prison as I am by perfidious manœuvres. I still have confidence that almighty God will previously snatch me from their hands to himself, through the merits [intercessions] of his saints. Salute all our friends for me, and let them pray to the Lord, that I may await my death with humility, and without murmuring."

CHAPTER XX.

Internal conflicts of Huss—Affectionate adieus to his friends—Brought before the council to hear his sentence—Borne down and oppressed by his judges—Appeals to the Judge of the universe—The emperor crimsoned with shame—Reading of the sentence.

THE day on which sentence was to be pronounced was approaching, but John Huss remained unalterable in purpose to die, rather than lie to his conscience. He thus wrote to one of his friends:—"My last resolution is, to refuse to acknowledge, as erroneous, those articles which have been truly extracted from my works, and never to abjure those which have been falsely attributed to me. I detest and condemn all *false* interpretations, which may happen to be given to the former. I submit to the correction of our divine Master, and put my trust in his infinite mercy."

"To justify myself," said he in another letter, "I call to memory the great number of holy men of the old and new covenant, who have suffered martyrdom rather than transgress the law of God. And I who for so many years have preached up patience and constancy under trials, shall I fall into perjury? Shall I so

shamefully scandalize the people of God? Far from me be the thought. The Lord Jesus will be my succor and my recompense."

In some of his letters to his friends he pours out his gratitude for their kindness, in most affectionate terms—he bids them farewell—and addresses them exhortations to live piously, and watch over their own safety. "May God be with you," says he to his noble protectors, "may he grant you all imaginable felicity, for the kindness with which you have loaded me. Do not permit the lord John de Chlum—that loyal knight—my dearest and best friend—my other self—to expose himself to danger through love for me. I conjure you to live according to the word of God, and to obey his precepts as I have instructed you. Return thanks for me to his majesty, the king of Bohemia, for all the benefits I have received from him."

To his disciple, Martin, the priest, he says, "Fear not to die if thou desirest to live with Christ; for he himself has said, 'Fear not them that kill the body, but who cannot kill the soul.'" And yet Huss gave to his friend this prudent counsel:—"Should they seek after thee on account of thy adhesion to my doctrines, make them this reply, 'I believe my master was a good Christian. But with regard to his writ-

ings and his instructions, I have neither read all, nor comprehend all.'"

Huss, in his adieus, showed no respect of persons. He remembered his most obscure disciples, and evinced as much love and as much gratitude for their friendship, as for that of the most illustrious personages. In his last letter to Martin, he says:—"I recommend to thee my very dear brethren. Thou wilt salute Peter, with his wife and family, and all who belong to the church of Bethlehem. Catharine, that holy maiden; Maurice Volzer, and all the friends of truth. . . . Let all those who have, or shall have any of my books, be prudent. . . . . Salute all my beloved brethren in Christ, the doctors, the public scribes, the cordwainers, and others. Recommend them to be zealous for the love of Christ, to advance with humility in wisdom, and not to indulge in comments of their own making."

Huss bequeathed some legacies to his most intimate friends; he prayed them to pay some debts of his; and the details into which he entered on this point fully refute the reproaches of those who accused him of having hoarded riches. The esteem which, to the last, he entertained for the writings of Wiclif may be proved by the bequest which he made of some

of them, together with some money, to Peter, the notary, one of his most devoted friends. "It is not," said he, "in this way that I pretend to recompense thy lovely and unalterable love of the truth—the various services which thou hast rendered me—and the consolations which thou hast lavished upon me in my difficulties. May God be thy great recompense for all these things! I have nothing to offer thee that is worthy of them."

John Huss pardoned all his enemies, of whom the most inveterate was Michael Causis. He wrote thus respecting him, June 23: "Michael has been several times in my prison, and said to my keepers, 'With the grace of God we shall soon burn this heretic.' Learn that I have no wish for vengeance—I leave him to God, and pray for this man *most affectionately*."

But notwithstanding the courage and constancy of John Huss, there were ties that bound him to life; nor did he overlook the agonies of a horrid death. To look upon his body, that master-piece of divine wisdom, so fearfully and wonderfully made—its exquisitely formed structure—its extremely sensitive nerves and fibres—and then to think of roasting in the flames—how could it be otherwise than that nature should recoil? "Certainly," said he, "it is a

difficult matter to rejoice, as says St. James, in the midst of trials. HE who was the most patient, and the most intrepid, although knowing that he should rise again on the third day —should vanquish his enemies by death—and should redeem the elect—even HE was troubled in spirit, and said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And an angel strengthened him in his agony—and a sweat as it were great drops of blood flowed down from his body.' O, divine Jesus, draw us then to thyself! Feeble as we are, if thou draw us not, we cannot follow in thy steps. Strengthen my spirit, that it may be ready and determined! The flesh is weak. Let thy Spirit prevent, assist, and accompany me; for without thee we can do nothing, and are incapable of braving for thy name a cruel death! . . . Written in chains, on the eve of the day of St. John the Baptist, who died in prison for having condemned the iniquity of the wicked.

"JOHN HUSS,

"*In hope the servant of* JESUS CHRIST."

In another letter, written near the same time, he resumes all his confidence and courage. After having again spoken of the holy men of the Old Testament who were miraculously

delivered, he says, "And I also, unworthy that I am, if it could contribute to his glory, to the benefit of believers, and my own good, could also be delivered by the Lord from chains and death. The power of Him who freed St. Peter from prison and from chains, when just ready to die, is not diminished. But the will of the Lord be done. May it be accomplished in me for his glory, and for my sins! . . . 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?'"

John Huss remained thirty days in prison after having publicly stood before his accusers. On the 6th of July, 1415, he appeared before them for the last time, to hear his sentence pronounced. It was the birthday of Huss, who was now forty-two years of age. The scene opened with great pomp. An immense procession of cardinals, bishops, doctors, and priests of all grades, repaired to the cathedral in festal habits. They were followed by the emperor, who wore his crown. On his right walked the duke of Bavaria, with a globe in his hand; on his left, the count palatine carried a naked sword. A vast concourse of people followed. The cardinal de Viviers presided.

When Huss arrived they were celebrating

mass, and he was kept outside lest his presence should profane the ordinance. In the middle of the church, opposite to the imperial throne, a high platform, or table, had been erected, on which lay a complete set of priestly vestments. In these Huss was to be arrayed, to be stripped of them afterward. He was brought in, guarded by soldiers, and directed to seat himself on a footstool in front of the table, sufficiently elevated to be seen by all. On taking his seat he made a long prayer, in a low voice; and while he was thus engaged, the bishop of Lodi ascended the pulpit. This prelate, who acted as official preacher of the council, and whose language was virulent and declamatory, seized with equal eagerness on all occasions of rejoicing or mourning to display his eloquence. He selected for his text the words of St. Paul, "*That the body of sin might be destroyed.*"

His sermon was so violent against the schism that at first one might have supposed he aimed at having the opposing popes burned rather than John Huss. He concluded, however, by thus addressing the emperor: "Destroy heresy and errors, and, above all, (pointing to Huss,) this obstinate heretic. It is a holy work, glorious prince, which is reserved for you to accomplish—you to whom the authority of justice

is given. Smite, then, such great enemies of the faith, that your praises may proceed from the mouths of children, and that your glory may be eternal. May Jesus Christ, for ever blessed, deign to accord you this favor!"

Immediately after the sermon, a bishop read the decree demanding silence. Nothing can show more clearly the arrogance of the ecclesiastics composing that council, or the humiliation in which kings and the emperor were held in their presence, than this decree. It ran thus: "The holy council of Constance, lawfully assembled by the influence of the Holy Spirit, decrees and orders every one, with whatever dignity he may be invested, whether *imperial*, *royal*, or *episcopal*, to abstain, during the present session, from all language, murmur, or noise, which may trouble the assembly, convoked with the inspiration of God; and this *under penalty of incurring excommunication, and imprisonment of two months; and to be declared an abettor of heresy.*"

The decree having been read, Henry Piron, the proctor of the council, rose, and demanded in its name the condemnation of John Huss and his writings.

The council then had sixty articles from Wiclif's works read and condemned anew. It

then proceeded to the works of John Huss, from which were read *thirty articles*, not previously read in public. Several of them were mere repetitions of those on which he had formerly been examined.

Huss wished to reply to each separately; but the cardinal of Cambray ordered him to be silent, and reply at the end to all of them together. Huss replied, that so great an effort of memory was absolutely impossible; and was proceeding with his request to be allowed to reply to each article as it was brought forward, when the cardinal of Florence stood up, and exclaiming, "You are stunning us," gave orders to *seize* him, and *force* him to keep silence. Then John Huss, with a loud voice, and his hand raised to heaven, cried out, "In the name of the almighty God, I conjure you to afford me an equitable hearing, that I may clear myself before all whom I see around me from the reproach of these errors. Grant me this favor, and then do with me what you will."

He was a second time prevented from speaking; and finding no hope of being allowed to repel so many accusations, he kneeled, and, raising his hands and eyes to heaven, commended his cause to the sovereign Judge of the universe.

After the reading of the articles, the depositions of witnesses followed; these were designated by their *titles*, but their *names were withheld*. The false charge respecting the sacrament, which he had fully refuted, was again brought forward. He was also accused, among other absurd charges, of having given himself out for the fourth person in the Godhead. This accusation was supported by the testimony of a doctor, whose name was withheld. Huss replied by repeating aloud the Athanasian Creed.

His appeal to Jesus Christ was again laid to his charge as a heavy crime. "Behold," cried he, with his hands joined and raised to heaven, "behold! O most kind Jesus, how thy council condemns what thou hast both ordered and practiced! When borne down by thy enemies thou didst deliver up thy cause into the hands of God, thy Father, leaving us this example, that we might appeal to the judgment of the most righteous Judge against oppression. Yes," continued he, turning toward the assembly; "I have maintained, and I still affirm, that it is impossible to appeal more safely than to Jesus Christ; because HE cannot be either corrupted by presents, deceived by false witnesses, or overreached by any artifice."

Then they accused him of having treated with contempt the excommunication of the pope. He replied, "I did not despise it; but as I did not consider him legitimate, I continued the duties of my ministry. I sent my procurators to Rome, where they were ill-treated, thrown into prison, and driven out. It is on that account that I determined of my own free will to appear before this council *under the public protection and faith of the emperor.*"

John Huss, in pronouncing these last words, looked full in the face of the emperor, whose cheek crimsoned with a deep blush.

Huss having publicly repeated his refusal to abjure, two sentences were pronounced against him. One condemned all his writings to be publicly burned; the other degraded him from the ministry, as a true and manifest heretic, and as one who had stubbornly persisted in scandalizing Christians, by appealing to Jesus Christ as to a sovereign Judge, in contempt of the Papacy and the censures of the church.

During the reading of the sentence, Huss, who was listening very attentively, several times exclaimed against it, particularly repelling the accusation of stubbornness. "I have always desired," he said, "and still desire, to

be better instructed by the Scriptures. I declare that my zeal for the truth is such that if I could overturn all the errors of heretics, there is no peril that I would not encounter for such a result." He then fell on his knees, and said, "Lord Jesus, pardon my enemies! Thou knowest that they have falsely accused me, and that they have had recourse to false testimony, and vile calumnies against me: pardon them, from thy infinite mercy!"

This prayer excited the indignation of some, and called forth mockery from others, particularly among the heads of the assembly.

It is said that one individual walked slowly through the cathedral, and at the door protested "that his conscience would no longer permit him to witness so infamous a transaction." This man was Gaspard Schlick, a peer, and chancelor of the emperor. He had been chief counselor to three successive kings, and is described as a learned and valiant man.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ceremony of degradation—Pious reflections made by Huss—Sees his books consuming in the flames while on his way to the flames in person—Prayer at the stake—Insult of the soldiers—Dies praying—Reflections.

And now commenced the afflicting ceremony of degradation. The bishops clothed John Huss in priestly vestments, and placed the chalice in his hand, as though he were about to celebrate mass. He said, in taking the cup, "Our Lord Jesus Christ was covered with a white robe by way of insult, when Herod had him conducted before Pilate." Being thus clad, the prelates again exhorted him to recant for the sake of his salvation and his honor. But he declared aloud, turning toward the people, that he should take good care not to lead the pious astray by a hypocritical recantation. "How could I," said he, "after having done so, raise my face to heaven? With what eye could I support the looks of that crowd of men whom I have instructed, should it come to pass, through my fault, that those things which they now regard as truths, should become matters of doubt? if, by my example, I caused confusion and trouble in so many souls, and so many consciences, which

I have filled with the pure doctrines of Christ's gospel, and which I have strengthened against the snares of the devil? No, no; it shall never be said that I preferred the safety of this miserable body, now destined to death, to their eternal salvation."

The bishops then made him descend from his seat, and took the chalice out of his hand, saying, "O accursed Judas, who having abandoned the councils of peace have taken part in that of the Jews. We take from you this cup filled with the blood of Jesus Christ."

"I hope, by the mercy of God," replied Huss, "that this very day I shall drink of his cup in his own kingdom; and in one hundred years you shall answer before God and before me."*

His habits were then taken off one after another, and on each of them the bishops pronounced some curse. When last of all it was necessary to efface the marks of the tonsure,† a dispute arose among them whether a razor or scissors ought to be used. "See," said Huss, turning to the emperor, "though they are equal-

* This prediction was noted down on a celebrated medal struck in Bohemia in 1415, immediately after Huss's death. LUTHER came a century after HUSS.

† In the Romish Church a particular method of shaving a portion of the head.

ly cruel, yet can they not agree on the manner of exercising their cruelty."

They then placed on his head a sort of crown on which were painted frightful figures of demons. It bore this inscription: THE ARCH HERETIC. And when he was thus arrayed, the bishops devoted his soul to the devils. John Huss, however, recommended his spirit to God, and said aloud, "I wear with joy this crown of approbrium for the love of Him who bore a crown of thorns."

These men shed no blood themselves—their hands were too pure—the emperor was their hangman. They therefore now gave up all claim to John Huss, declared him a layman, and handed him over to the secular power.

John Huss was then, by order of the emperor, given over for execution. He walked to the place between four town sergeants. The princes followed with an escort of eight hundred men strongly armed, and the concourse of people was so great that a bridge was very near breaking down under them. In passing the episcopal palace, Huss saw a great fire consuming his books, at which he smiled.

The place of execution was a meadow adjoining the gardens of the city, outside the gate of Gotleben. On arriving at the spot, Huss kneel-

ed down and recited some of the penitential psalms. Several of the people hearing him pray, said aloud, "We are ignorant of this man's crime, but he offers up to God most excellent prayers."

When he was in front of the pile of wood which was to consume his body, he was recommended to confess his sins. Huss consented. Ulrich Schoram, a man of great learning and high reputation, was brought to him. The priest refused to hear him unless he recanted. "A heretic," he said, "could neither give nor receive the sacraments." Huss replied, "I do not feel myself to be guilty of any mortal sin, and now that I am on the point of appearing before God, I will not purchase absolution by a perjury."

When he wished to address the people in German, the elector palatine opposed it, and ordered him to be forthwith burned. "Lord Jesus," cried Huss, "I shall endeavor to endure with humility this frightful death which I am awarded for thy holy gospel; pardon all my enemies." While he was thus praying with his eyes raised to heaven, the paper crown fell off; he smiled, but the soldiers replaced it, in order, as they said, that he might be burned with the devils he had obeyed.

Having obtained permission to speak to his keepers, he thanked them for their kind treatment: "My brethren," said he, "learn that I firmly believe in my Saviour. It is in his name that I suffer, and this very day I shall go and reign with him."

His body was then bound with thongs to a stake driven deeply into the ground. When this was done, an objection was raised against a heretic being allowed to die with his face to the east. He was then untied and bound again, with his face to the west. His head was held close to the wood by a chain smeared with soot, which gave him occasion for pious reflections on the ignominy of our Saviour's sufferings.

Fagots were then arranged about and under his feet; and around him was piled a quantity of wood and straw. When the preparations were completed, the elector palatine, accompanied by Count d'Oppenheim, marshal of the empire, came up to Huss, and again recommended him to retract. But he, looking up to heaven, said with a loud voice, "I call God to witness, that I have never taught or written what those false witnesses have laid to my charge: my sermons, my books, and my writings, have all been prepared with the sole view of rescuing souls from the tyranny of sin; and,

therefore, most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have taught, written, and preached, and which is confirmed by the divine law and by the holy fathers."

Astonished at a firmness, the source of which he did not comprehend, the elector clasped his hands over his head, and with his companion retreated from the scene. A signal was now given, and the pile was set on fire. As the flames rose the martyr cried, "Jesus, Son of the living God, have pity upon me." He then commenced singing the first verse of an old hymn. After the words,

"And take me to thyself,
To live with thee for ever,"

his voice was drowned by the roaring of the flames. For a few moments his lips continued to move as if in prayer. His head then sunk on his shoulder, and his pure spirit rose to heaven.

When the smoke and flames had somewhat subsided, the upper part of the body was found half consumed. This the executioners tore in pieces and threw back into the funeral pile, until the fire had absolutely consumed everything. The ashes were then collected and thrown into the Rhine.

Thus perished, at the age of forty-two, one

of those men whose character reflects honor upon the Christian church; and it is not easy at first glance to discern the real causes of his death. The following words are found in an old manuscript copy of his works:—"As long as John Huss merely declaimed against the vices of the laity, every one said he was inspired with the Spirit of God. But as soon as he proceeded against ecclesiastics, he became an object of odium, for he then really laid his finger on the sore." Yet many others were even more severe against the vices of the popes and the clergy, and yet escaped with impunity. Peter de Ailly, Clemangis, Gerson, and many others, used the strongest epithets in speaking on these points. Even in the sermons preached before the very council that doomed John Huss to the flames will be found a crowd of expressions as strong as any of those which fell from John Huss. They openly designate the Roman Church as a hole of iniquity, and declare the pope to be as wicked as antichrist. John Huss, besides, always declared and believed himself a good Catholic. In general he did not attack the Romanist *doctrines*, but only their *abuse*.

In presence of these facts, the question is asked with astonishment, not unmingled with terror, What could have induced the council to

treat with so much severity a man of the purest life, and alike estimable for his knowledge and piety? Two causes may be assigned, each of which excited against him in the highest degree the hatred of the clergy.

In the first place, John Huss, like Wiclif, beheld the sources of the wickedness of the clergy in their riches. Avarice was the predominant passion; and the priests had become the owners of a great portion of Christendom. They sold ecclesiastical benefices to the greatest reprobates, if they had only gold to pay for them. They taxed the soil under the name of tithes; they extorted money for masses, baptisms, and the burial of the dead. They wrung gold from the grasp of the dying miser by absolving his sins; they invented purgatory, and then prayed the dead sinner out of it, for gold from his living friends. They opened the gates of heaven to the libertine and the murderer, if he proffered them a sufficient sum to pay for turning the keys. These remarks apply more particularly to the pontiffs, the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and the higher clergy. There were many honorable exceptions; but the others gave tone to the church. That the above picture is not overdrawn is evident from the writings of the most illustrious Romanists themselves.

GERSON declares: "The court of Rome has invented a thousand church services to make money; but few indeed have been made for the sake of virtue only. We hear much from morning till night in that court of armies, and lands, and towns, and money; but we seldom or ever hear of chastity, justice, fidelity, and morality; so that the court which was formerly spiritual has now become worldly, devilish, tyrannical, and worse than any secular court. . . . The secular powers ought not to suffer the church to be thus profaned."

CLEMANGIS, another Romanist writer, says of the popes: "To maintain their rank, which they affirm to be superior to that of kings or emperors, they were found, after having dissipated the patrimony of St. Peter, to lay hands on other parts of the fold; and take from the flock their food, milk, and fleece. It was thus that they arrogated to themselves the disposal of all the churches, the right of election and patronage; [election of bishops, &c.;] that they might draw into the gulf of the apostolic chamber [in other words, into their own coffers] all the gold in Christendom." "The benefices," he says, "were disposed of neither to the best nor the most learned, but to the most wealthy." He goes on to give a most hideous picture of the exces-

sive ignorance and degradation into which the clergy had fallen, describing them as gadding from house to house, *gambling, drinking, and giving themselves up to all sorts of excesses.* Passing from the corruptions of the secular clergy to that of the monasteries, he says: "Now when a maiden takes the veil she may be looked upon as dishonored."

At the root of these corruptions Huss aimed a mortal blow, by assigning to the secular power the right of enforcing a proper use of the possessions of the church, or of taking them away altogether from such as expended them upon their sinful gratifications.

But secondly, though Huss professed himself obedient to the rulers of the church, he affixed a *condition* to his submission. He insisted that the voice of his *conscience*, as enlightened and guided by the *Scriptures*, should approve of what was required. If any doctrine was denounced as error, he required that its falsehood should be proved by the divine word.

This was to allow in the inspired Scriptures, interpreted by private judgment, an authority superior to the decisions of the church—to question the infallibility of its leaders—it was, in fact, to attack the authority by which they held Christendom in bondage. This was the

sin for which neither pope nor council had any remission. John XXIII., though crimsoned with guilt, a pirate, a debauchee, a simonist, a murderer, could be pardoned, and restored to high office in the church. But John Huss had probed the wounds of the ecclesiastical body to the bottom; he had unveiled her corruptions to the world; he had done worse; he had uncovered the secret springs of her tyranny; pointed out the way to break them; had even dared to tell the world that God was a higher authority than the church. For him, therefore, there remained only recantation or death.

It is in this last respect—his belief in the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the right of private judgment—that John Huss is connected with communions who have thrown off the tyranny of the Church of Rome. His doctrine is the doctrine of the Protestant Church—the common bond which unites them in one. THE BIBLE WAS THE RELIGION OF JOHN HUSS—"THE BIBLE IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS." Strange destiny of Huss! Most curious problem! In his way of thinking, all separation from the old trunk of the church was a heresy; and yet the separated church considers herself honored in enrolling him among her martyrs. He protests his de-

votion to the Roman Church even unto death; and that church condemns him to death. It is here that the truth is stronger than the individual; the premises, once admitted, bear him on, far beyond the limits he has assigned to himself; and, without knowing it, he becomes a reformer.

And here appears the only real question between the two great parties in Christendom, "*Who is to interpret the law of God? Who is at last to deduce from it the rule of faith—of life? Is it the priesthood or the conscience?*" John Huss considered himself a Romanist; and yet he appealed from the church to his conscience—and to God. He was a *Protestant* without knowing it. The church condemned in his person, not the evils that may sometimes result from liberty of conscience, but they condemned liberty of conscience itself: and the flames of his funeral pile instructed Europe and the world, that Rome placed individual freedom in the list of heresies, for which men were to be burned.

CHAPTER XXII.

Effects of John Huss's death upon Bohemia—High eulogium pronounced upon him by the university of Prague—Action of the barons—Weakness of Jerome—He recants—Resumes his courage—Oppressed and persecuted by the council—Recants his recantation—Bears a noble testimony to the character and piety of John Huss—Rage of the council—Is conducted back to prison, and loaded with chains.

THE flames which consumed John Huss gave new life to his word; and the torch which kindled his funeral pile set Bohemia on fire. When the news of his martyrdom reached Prague, the excited multitude flocked in crowds to the chapel of Bethlehem; and the man whom the council had burned as a heretic was honored by the people as a martyr, and a saint already glorified.

Nor was it merely the multitude that rendered homage to his memory. The barons and nobles of the kingdom met, and, with their hands upon their swords, vowed to avenge the death of him whom they regarded as the apostle of Bohemia. The university of Prague also met, and its doctors indignantly appealed to all Europe against the perfidy of the council, and the reproaches directed against themselves. "In the midst," say they, "of our innumerable

and poignant sources of grief, we consider it indispensable to defend the insulted reputation of our university, hitherto always considered so pure, against the attacks of blasphemers. To all other motives, urging us to this course, is added the remembrance of the honor and virtue of that man who is now lost to us for ever. . . . We desire to do this, that the great renown of one of our children, John, of Hussinetz, surnamed Huss, should not fade, but shine forth more and more in the eyes of the whole world. . . . We desire the more ardently that our words may be heard by all believers, because the presence of so great a man among us has produced so much good before God and before men. . . . For his life glided on before our eyes from his very infancy; and was so holy and pure that no man could show him to be guilty of a single fault. O man, truly pious! truly humble! thou who wert conspicuous with the lustre of such great virtues—who wert accustomed to despise riches, and to succor the poor, even to experiencing want thyself—whose place was by the bedside of the unfortunate—who didst invite, by thy tears, the most hardened hearts to repentance, and didst soothe rebellious spirits by the mildness of the Word—thine it was to root out from every heart, and

particularly that of a clergy, rich, covetous, and haughty, their manifold vices, by applying to them the ancient remedy, the Scriptures; but which appeared new doctrines in thy mouth—thou, in short, following in the footsteps of the apostles, didst restore the morals of the primitive church in both clergy and people! . . . Ah! beyond a doubt, nature had loaded this man with all her gifts, and the divine grace was so abundantly shed around him, that not only was he virtuous, but it is even permitted to assert, that he was virtue itself. But why employ words when acts speak? A frightful death, inflicted by his enemies, and supported with such wonderful patience, proves that he built his trust on a heavenly foundation. . . . It is, in fact, a divine thing—the effect of a courage inspired by God alone to endure so many outrages and tortures, and so much infamy for the divine truth—to receive all these insults with a countenance calm and serene—to shine forth by the greatest piety in the face of tyrants, and thus to terminate an irreproachable life by the most bitter death."

The barons assumed a loftier tone. They eulogized in the highest terms the preaching of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. . . . "Whom," continued they, in the warlike defiance addressed

to the council, "you have also seized, imprisoned, and, perhaps, by this time, cruelly put to death." They declared, "that, in spite of all human ordinances, they would support the humble, devoted, faithful preachers, who should make known the words of the Lord Jesus Christ; and defend and protect them fearlessly, even to the shedding of blood."

The threatening letter of the nobles of Bohemia produced great excitement in the council, and at first held the leaders irresolute as to the line of conduct they should adopt toward Jerome of Prague. Irritated by the letter of the nobles, they would willingly have dispatched him to execution, but they feared the determined men who had identified their cause with his. They, therefore, determined to extricate themselves from their difficulty by inducing him to abjure.

He had been for six months pining away in chains, and had been treated in his noisome dungeon with a cruelty at which humanity shudders.

Already his legs were afflicted with incurable ulcers. It was hoped that sufferings of such duration and rigor had subdued his courage. He was, accordingly, taken out of prison, and commanded, under pain of being burned alive, to abjure his errors, and subscribe to the justice of John Huss's death.

Suffering had depressed the spirits of Jerome, and human weakness prevailed. He signed a paper, by which he submitted himself to the council, and approved of all its acts. This retraction of Jerome proves, by the very restrictions it contains, how much it must have cost this unfortunate sufferer to consent to it. He subscribed, it is true, to the condemnation of the articles of Wiclif and John Huss; but he declared he had no intention of bearing any prejudice to the holy truths which these two men had taught. As to Huss, he avowed that he had loved him from his tenderest years; and that he had always been ready to defend him against every one, on account of the mildness of his language, and the good instructions he gave the people. Better informed at present, he had no wish to stand forward as the partisan of his errors. While, however, he condemned them, he honored his person, his excellent morals, and the various fine expressions which had fallen from his lips. Such restrictions as these were little calculated to satisfy the men who had burned John Huss. They demanded a more precise retraction, and drew up a new form, which was presented to Jerome, and read by him aloud, in full council. He had next to answer to certain questions, growing out of the

speculative differences between the Nominalists and Realists. These philosophic subtilties, it seems, had actually become matters of life and death.

Jerome swore to live and die in the Catholic faith; and he anathematized all who should maintain anything against it. After this he was led back to prison, and treated with less severity.

There was every reason to expect the council would rest satisfied with what had been done; and so it was at first. But enmity demanded more than this. At the instigation of Michael Causis and Peter Paletz, monks came from Prague, and brought forward new charges against Jerome; and his enemies demanded that the proceedings should be revised. The council was divided in opinion on this question; but finally the majority, probably thinking it no longer possible that prudential measures should prevent a popular outbreak in Bohemia, gave themselves up to their persecuting instincts.

The most prudent members, particularly the first commissioners, the cardinals of Cambray, Des Ursius, Aquileia, and Florence, declared that he had obeyed the council, and insisted on his being set at liberty. A loud murmur greeted this demand. Dr. Nason was bold enough to

say to the cardinals, "We are much astonished, reverend fathers, to find you interceding for this pestilent heretic, from whom we have received so much injury in Bohemia; and who could easily cause as much to yourselves. Is it possible that you have been gained over by bribes from the king of Bohemia? or from the heretics? Can they have purchased from you the liberty of this man?"

At these words the cardinals rose up, and demanded to be discharged from their office as commissioners in the proceedings against Jerome. New commissioners were elected, and among them the patriarch of Constantinople, the most ardent persecutor of John Huss.

Jerome now saw that, to save his life, he must plunge still deeper into perjury. Conscience resumed her authority—the love of truth prevailed over the love of life; and he at once made up his mind to recant his forced recantation. He refused positively to reply to his new judges; and demanded a public audience, at which he might clearly and fully expose his sentiments. This demand was acceded to; and on the 23d of May he was taken to the cathedral, where John Huss had evinced so much firmness, and suffered so many indignities. The council were here assembled; and

the new commissioners brought forward seven heads of accusation. The plot was designedly framed in such a manner that, without the foulest perjury, it was impossible for him to escape. The articles, which were read by John de Rocha, charged Jerome with having honored Wiclif as a saint and a martyr—with having contemned the authority of the church, by administering the sacrament at Prague, at the very time that he was excommunicated in Austria—with having shown himself the abettor of John Huss—with having counterfeited the seal of the university of Oxford, in order to give a favorable testimony to Wiclif—and, above all, with having committed violence and sacrilege, by publishing libels against the pope and the princes—with having fomented sanguinary insurrections at Prague—and with having excited the nobles to despoil the clergy.

In addition to these accusations several persons charged him with heretical opinions on some other points. On the doctrine of the Trinity, he had, it was said, confessed the Athanasian Creed, but the explanation he gave of it smacked of heresy. As to the power of the priests, he had said that excommunication was only to be feared by those who incurred that of God himself: and as to relics, Jerome had dared

to uphold that no worship was due to them. He had even asserted that the veil of the Virgin was not more worthy the homage of Christians than the skin of the ass on which Christ had ridden.

The proctor of the council, Henry Piron, enumerated these latter grievances, and added several others; and above all accused Jerome of having been intemperate in his prison. He represented his retraction as worthy of suspicion, and insisted on his being obliged to reply by a single word, *yes*, or *no*, to each article. He advised the *torture* to be employed should it be found necessary. "Should the prisoner," concluded he, "persevere in his error, let him be treated as an obstinate heretic and be delivered over to the secular authority."

The demand of the proctor was complied with, and Jerome was authorized to reply to each article, but in the briefest manner. He however was fully resolved not to express his opinions until he was allowed to expose them with perfect freedom. He therefore demanded permission to explain himself fully. "Confine yourself to give a simple reply, and answer forthwith," was the general exclamation. "God of goodness," said Jerome, "what injustice! what cruelty! You have held me shut up three hun-

dred and forty days in a frightful prison, in the midst of filth, stench, and the utmost want of everything. You then bring me out before you, and lending an ear to my mortal enemies, you refuse to hear me. Is it astonishing that they have persuaded you that I am the most stubborn of heretics, the enemy of the faith, the persecutor of priests? I have never been able to obtain, notwithstanding my most humble entreaties, a single moment to justify myself; and before you made the slightest attempt to ascertain what I am, you have treated me as an unbeliever. And yet you are men, and not gods—you can fall into error, and be mistaken. If you be really wise men, and the lights of the world, take care not to sin against justice. As to me, I am only a feeble mortal, my life is of but little importance; and when I exhort you not to deliver an unjust sentence, I speak less for myself than for you."

A great noise followed these words; and Jerome was peremptorily ordered to be silent. But the council at last agreed that he should be allowed to explain himself freely after he had replied to each article.

Two entire sittings, the 23d and 26th of May, were occupied in this most trying examination; during which each of *one hundred and seven*

articles was successively brought before him. All the historians, Romanist and Hussite, agree that he replied with astonishing ability and presence of mind—discussing every point—rejecting some, and admitting others as true. "It is incredible," said the celebrated Poggio of Florence, who was present during the whole time, "what a multitude of authorities and reasons he alledged in support of his opinions. Not once during the whole time did he express a thought which was unworthy of a man of worth; so that if his sentiments on the faith were in conformity with his words, there was no reason to accuse, much less to condemn him. When he heard himself branded as an enemy to the pope, the adversary of the cardinals, and the persecutor of the prelates, he rose, and stretching forth his hands, cried out with a pathetic voice, 'To what side shall I turn, O fathers! from whom shall I expect support and succor? whom in fact shall I supplicate? Is it you? Alas, my cruel enemies have already alienated your minds from me, by representing me as your persecutor. They have said to themselves, "The charges against this man are too slight to warrant his condemnation to death. Let us depict him as the enemy of his judges, and he is sure to be condemned." O Lord, thy will be done.'"

He believed the right to preach the gospel belonged to laymen as well as to priests; but he denied that he had suspended the pope's bull around the neck of certain abandoned women. The pope, in his opinion, had a right to grant indulgences; but it was not allowable for him to dispose of them for money. The dogma of the real presence in the sacrament he fully admitted.

Perfectly in possession of his mental powers, notwithstanding so many sufferings, he at one time confounded his judges by the vigor of his eloquence; and at another provoked their smiles by some keen pleasantry.

At last, on the second day, May 26th, all the articles having been read, Jerome obtained, though not without great difficulty, the privilege which he had so long applied for in vain—that of speaking without constraint.

First of all, addressing his prayers to God, he besought his heavenly Father to place in his thoughts and in his mouth only such words as should be for the well-being and safety of his soul. Then turning toward the assembly, he said:—"Reverend fathers, many excellent men have in all ages suffered most unworthy treatment—have been oppressed by false witnesses, and condemned by perverse judges." He then

referred to the death of Socrates, the captivity of Plato, the flight of Anaxagoras, and the tortures of Zeno. Next passing to the Hebrews, he enumerated the trials of Moses, the afflictions of Joseph, of Isaiah, of Daniel, and almost all the prophets—the victims of unjust resentments, and condemned as seditious persons, and the enemies of God. Arriving lastly at the holy men of the New Testament, he showed John the Baptist, and the Saviour himself, condemned on false testimony—after them Stephen put to death by a college of priests—and the apostles persecuted and punished as the exciters of disturbance, the enemies of the gods, and the workers of iniquity. "It is," said he, "an odious thing to have a priest condemned by a priest: but the crowning point of iniquity is when he is condemned by a council of priests; and yet that has been seen, that has been done."

As the whole case rested on the testimony of witnesses, Jerome gave excellent reasons why their testimony should be regarded as unworthy of confidence. He showed that their expressions were colored by hatred, and not by truth. Indeed, he exposed the motives of his enemies with such force, that he was on the point of persuading the assembly. In fact, he seemed evidently to have awakened in the assembly

feelings of pity. He reminded them that he had come of his own accord to Constance to justify himself. He recalled to the minds of his hearers his long course of study; and his whole life consecrated to his duties, and the practice of well-doing. "In the ancient church," said he, "the most learned and the most holy doctors were divided in opinion; and these differences did not tend to the ruin of the faith. . . . In this way St. Jerome and St. Augustine were divided, and even opposed to each other, and yet no suspicion was ever entertained with respect to them."

Every one thought he was going to clear himself of the accusation, either by retraction or by humbly asking pardon. But nothing of the kind took place. He refused to acknowledge himself to be guilty of any error; and maintained that it was not for him to retract the accusations of his enemies. He spoke in the very highest terms of John Huss. "I knew him from his childhood," said he, "and there was never anything wrong in him. He was a most excellent man, just and holy—he was condemned notwithstanding his innocence—he has ascended to heaven, like Elijah, in the midst of the flames; and from thence he will summon his judges to the formidable tribunal of Christ.

I also—I am ready to die. I will not recoil before the torments that are prepared for me by my enemies and false witnesses, who will have one day to render an account of their impostures before the great God, whom nothing can deceive."

The greatest agitation now prevailed in the assembly. Many were anxious to save the life of a man of such great merit. But he did not appear to feel any care about his life; or rather seemed to aspire after death. "Of all the sins," said he, "that I have committed since my youth, none weighs so heavily on my mind, and causes me such poignant remorse, as that which I committed in this fatal place, when I approved of the iniquitous sentence against Wiclif, and against the holy martyr, John Huss, my master and my friend. Yes, I confess it from my heart; and declare with horror, that I disgracefully quailed, when through a dread of death I condemned their doctrine. I therefore supplicate and conjure almighty God to deign to pardon me my sins—and this one in particular, the most heinous of all—according to the promise which he has made us, 'I will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live.' You condemned Wiclif and John Huss; not for having shaken

the doctrine of the church; but simply because they branded with reprobation the scandals of the clergy—their pomp, their pride, and all the vices of the prelates and the priests. The things which they said, and which are irrefutable, I also think and declare."

At these words the assembly shook with anger. "He condemns himself," was exclaimed from all sides. "What need is there of further proof? We behold with our own eyes the most obstinate of heretics."

"What!" resumed Jerome, "do you suppose that I fear to die? You have held me for a whole year in a frightful dungeon, more horrible than death itself. You have treated me more cruelly than a Turk, Jew, or pagan; and my flesh has literally rotted off my bones alive. And yet I make no complaint, for lamentation ill becomes a man of heart and spirit. But I cannot express my astonishment at such barbarity toward a Christian."

A fresh burst of clamor rose against him, and he remained without speaking until silence was again restored. He then resumed in the firmest and most lofty tone. "His voice," says Poggio, "was touching, clear, and sonorous: his jesture full of dignity and persuasiveness; whether he expressed indignation, or moved his

hearers to pity; which, however, he neither asked nor appeared to desire. He stood there in the midst of all, the features pale, but the heart intrepid—despising death, and advancing to meet it. Interrupted frequently, attacked, and tormented; he replied fully to all, and took vengeance on them, forcing some to blush, and others to be silent, and towering above all their clamors. Sometimes, too, he earnestly besought; and at others forcibly claimed to be permitted to speak freely—calling on the assemby to listen to him whose voice would soon be hushed for ever."

When he had at last concluded his address, he was carried back to his dungeon, where he was more strictly fettered than before. His hands, his arms, and his feet were loaded with irons; and they who had listened to his address remarked to each other, "He has pronounced his own sentence."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Affecting circumstances of Jerome during his imprisonment—Chief cause of his recantation—Cardinals and bishops flock to his dungeon to persuade him to recant—Like Huss, he refuses to allow himself to be convinced except by the Scriptures—His sentence—Death.

A DEATH voluntarily suffered, for a just and holy cause, is the more striking, as it had been previously shunned and dreaded. It is this circumstance which throws so great an interest around Jerome's last moments—an interest, in some respects, superior to that which belongs to the death of John Huss.

There was also a difference in the circumstances of the two during their imprisonment. John Huss had near him, during most of that time, his most devoted friends and disciples; and his letters acknowledge with gratitude the support and comfort he derived from them. But what had now become of the noble barons, Duba, Hussinetz, and John de Chlum, Jerome's most attached friends, all of whom had accompanied John Huss to the council? They had, doubtless, departed—finding they could do little at Constance, where bloody counsels triumphed, and knowing that Bohemia demanded their

presence. Neither is it known what, at this period, had become of Peter, the good notary. We have seen how he risked his life to encourage Jerome. What, then, was he now doing? Was he still at Constance? or had he already quitted this fatal place, where attachment to a friend was deemed a crime worthy of death? The history of this period makes no mention of him, and we are left to infer that Jerome was alone in the midst of his mortal enemies, with no voice to cheer him, and no eye to look kindly upon him.

The above facts are not to be forgotten: still the grand secret of Jerome's weakness seems evidently this—like Peter, in the hall of Caiaphas, he trusted too much to himself. By nature, bold, ardent, and self-confident, he left Bohemia, strong in his own might. But he was left to learn, to his cost, that "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." But when he appealed to almighty God, as he did before the council, for strength and wisdom, how did he rise from his fall, and how truly great did he stand forth! It was then that, *through the power of divine grace*, he triumphed over his terror, and displayed a courage that made up for all his former weakness.

Struck by his eloquence, and astonished by

his great abilities, the cardinals and bishops came in crowds to visit him in his prison, conjuring him to save his life by subscribing the sentence passed upon John Huss, and by abjuring his doctrine. "I will abjure," said he, "if you demonstrate to me by the Holy Scriptures that it is false."

"Can you be to such an extent your own enemy?" inquired the bishops.

"What," said he, "do you suppose life is so precious to me that I fear to give it for the truth? or for Him who gave his for mine? Are you not cardinals? are you not bishops? and can you be ignorant what Christ has said, 'He that does not give up all for my sake, is not worthy of me?' . . . Behind me, tempters."

The cardinal of Florence presented himself last. He sent for Jerome, and said to him, "Jerome, you are a learned man, whom God has loaded with his choicest gifts—do not employ them for your own ruin, but for the advantage of the church. The council has compassion on you, and, on account of your rare talents, would regret to behold you marching to execution. You may aspire to high honors, and be a powerful succor to the church of Jesus Christ, if you consent to be converted like St. Peter and St. Paul. The church is

not to such a point cruel as to refuse you pardon, if you become worthy of it; and I promise you every kind favor when it shall be found that neither obstinacy nor falsehood remains in you. Reflect while there is yet time. Spare your own life, and open your heart to me."

Jerome replied, "The only favor I demand, and which I have always demanded, is, to be convinced by the Holy Scriptures. This body, which has suffered such frightful torments in my chains, will also know how to support death by fire for Jesus Christ."

"Jerome," asked the cardinal, "do you suppose yourself to be wiser than all the council?"

"I am anxious to be instructed," rejoined Jerome; "and he who desires to be instructed cannot be infatuated with ideas of his own wisdom."

"And in what manner do you wish to be instructed?"

"By the holy writings, which are our illuminating torch."

"What, is everything to be judged by the holy writings? Who can perfectly comprehend them? And must not the fathers, at least, be appealed to, to interpret them?"

"What do I hear?" cried Jerome; "shall the word of God be declared fallacious? And

shall it not be listened to? Are the traditions of men more worthy of faith than the holy gospel of our Saviour? Paul did not exhort the priests to listen to old men and traditions, but said, 'The Holy Scripture will instruct you.' O sacred writings! inspired by the Holy Ghost! already men esteem you less than what they themselves forge every day! I have lived long enough. Great God, receive my life—thou who canst restore it to me!"

"Heretic," said the cardinal, "I repent having so long pleaded with you. I see that you are urged on by the devil."

Jerome was once more taken back to his dungeon, where he remained until May 30, on which day the council held its twenty-first general session.

The report spread that on that day Jerome was to be condemned; and immediately the whole city was on the alert. The emperor was absent; but the elector palatine supplied his place as protector of the council. By his orders the troops were called out, and placed under arms. The bishop of Riga then had Jerome conducted to the cathedral, where he formally demanded a retraction of what he had lately said in public.

Jerome exclaimed, "Almighty God! and you

who hear me, bear witness. I swear that I believe all the articles of the Catholic faith, as the church believes and observes them. But I refuse to subscribe to the condemnation of those just and holy men whom you have unjustly condemned because they have denounced the scandals of your lives—and it is for this that I am about to perish."

Jerome then repeated aloud the Nicene Creed and the Confession of Athanasius, and spoke for a considerable time with as much ability as eloquence.

All were lost in admiration at his knowledge and his admirable language. Several drew near to him, and presented him with a new form of retraction, exhorting him to allow himself to be prevailed upon; but he refused to listen to any persuasion on that point.

Then the bishop of Lodi ascended the pulpit, and announced for his text these words: "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart."

When we consider the terrible cruelty with which this excellent man had been treated, we can perceive nothing in the bishop's discourse, however he may have intended it, but a long and cruel irony.

"Reverend fathers," said the bishop, "and you believing Catholic and orthodox noblemen, as it often happens that a slight correction"—chains and torments slight corrections!—"is powerless, and that a severe chastisement produces more effect, it is necessary that those with whom mildness can do nothing, should be treated rigorously. . . . When the iron does not assume the desired shape with facility, it is submitted to the action of a hotter fire, and a more weighty hammer. It is on this account, Jerome, that having beheld your prolonged obstinacy, and heard your last most perverse reply, I can say of you what Isaiah declares, 'I know that thou art obstinate; thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass.' But wait for what is to follow. The hardened heart shall be visited with afflictions at the end, and he who loves danger shall perish in it."

. . . "In order," said he, "that you may the better understand with what *charity* you have been chastened—with what *love*—with what long and *pious mildness* you have been reprehended and exhorted, I have chosen for my text these words, '*He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.*'"

He then dwelt at great length on the evils of a haughty presumption, in which he remarked,

it was easy to see the source of Jerome's errors, and the cause of his ruin.

He next proceeded to charge all the disorders which the avarice, simony, and corruptions of the court of Rome, and of the clergy, and the perfidy of the council, had brought upon Bohemia, upon John Huss and Jerome—the very men who had periled their lives in opposing these corruptions. He taunted Jerome and John Huss with being men of "obscure extraction and low birth;" called them "vile plebeians;" and charged them with being the occasion of murders, and the profanation of the altars of religion. "Would to God," said he, "you had been tortured! You would have denied your errors in your torments, and suffering would have opened your eyes, which your crime held closed."

After this harangue, Jerome, in order to be better heard by all, mounted on a bench, from which he addressed the assembly. With great energy he repelled all the accusations of the prelate relative to the disturbances in Bohemia. He repeated that he should die a Catholic, as he had lived. But he expressed the utmost abhorrence of the assent he had given to the sentence of John Huss. "I only gave it," said he, "from a dread of being burned—from the fear

of that dreadful punishment. I revoke that culpable avowal; and I declare it anew, that I lied like a wretch in abjuring the doctrines of Wiclif and John Huss, and in approving of the death of so holy a man. As to you, you cannot cite a single point on which my doctrine has been either erroneous or heretical. You wish to see me die because I honor upright men, who have stigmatized the pride and avarice of the priests. Yet is that a sufficient cause to warrant my death? Why, before you found in me any evil whatever, you had resolved that I should die. Courage, therefore, and proceed. But believe me, that in dying, I will leave a sting in your hearts, and a gnawing worm in your consciences. I appeal to the sacred tribunal of Jesus Christ; and *within a hundred years you shall answer there for your conduct to me.*"

The patriarch of Constantinople then read Jerome's sentence. It was founded wholly on his retraction, and on the approbation which he had publicly given to the doctrines of Wiclif and John Huss, with the exception of the opinion of the former on the sacrament. "He has returned like a dog to his vomit," said the sentence. "Therefore the sacred council orders, that he shall be torn from the vine like a barren

and rotten branch." It declared him heretical, backsliding, and excommunicated; it condemned him, and cursed him; and, finally, it abandoned him to the secular judge, to receive capital punishment, which the council said it trusted was not too great.

Some historians state that the emperor's chancelor, Gaspard Schlick, the same person who left the council in the midst of the outrageous proceedings against John Huss, advanced into the middle of the assembly, and protested against the condemnation of Jerome, threatening the persons engaged in it with the anger of Sigismund. This tardy interposition was not attended to, and the chancelor retired without having effected anything.

Jerome was at once handed over to the secular power. A high crown of paper, on which was painted demons in flames, was brought in. Jerome, on seeing it, threw his hat on the ground in the midst of his persecutors; and placing the badge of infamy on his head with his own hands, repeated the words of John Huss: "Jesus Christ who died for me, a sinner, wore a crown of thorns: I willingly wear this for him." The soldiers then seized him and led him away to death.

On the way from the cathedral to the place

of burning, Jerome repeated with a firm voice the Apostles' Creed, his eyes upraised to heaven, and his countenance beaming with hallowed joy. When he arrived at the place where John Huss had suffered, he fell on his knees, near the image of his master, carved on the stake to which he was about to be bound, and there he prayed to God.

The executioners raised him up while still praying. Having bound him to the stake with cords and chains, they heaped around him pieces of wood and a quantity of straw. Jerome then sung a hymn. He next repeated the creed; and then addressing the people, he exclaimed: "This creed, which I have just sung, is my real profession of faith. I die, therefore, only for not having consented to acknowledge that John Huss was justly condemned. I declare that I always believed him to be a true preacher of the gospel." Seeing a poor husbandman bringing a fagot, he smiled and said, "O holy simplicity! a thousand times more guilty is he who abuses thee."

When the wood was raised on a level with his head, his vestments were thrown on the pile; and, as the executioner was setting fire to the mass behind him in order to avoid being seen, "Come forward boldly," said Jerome, "ap-

ply the fire before my face. Had I been afraid I should not be here." When the pile had taken fire, he said with a loud voice, "Lord, into thy hands do I commit my spirit." Feeling already the burning heat of the flames, he was heard to cry out, in the Bohemian language, "Lord, almighty Father, have pity on me and pardon me my sins, for thou knowest that I have always loved thy truth." His voice was soon lost; but, by the rapid movement of his lips, it was easy to see that he continued to pray.

At last, when the flames had done their office, all that belonged to him, his bed, cap, and shoes, were brought from the prison and thrown into the flames, and reduced to ashes with himself. These ashes were then collected and thrown into the Rhine, as had been done in the case of John Huss. It was hoped by these means to remove from the followers of these two great martyrs every article that might by possibility become objects of veneration. But the very ground where their stake was placed was hollowed out, (in that age of relics and superstition,) and carried into Bohemia, and guarded with the greatest care.

Romanist writers have always been in the habit of assuring us that *the church sheds no blood*. To justify the unutterable cruelty and

perfidy exercised toward John Huss and Jerome, by the most imposing council *that* church ever assembled, we are told, "It was not the council, it was the emperor who smote John Huss; for it was the emperor who ordered his punishment." By the same mode of reasoning, St. Peter was much mistaken in charging the death of our Saviour upon the Jewish council; for it was Pilate who gave the sentence!

The sanguinary annals of the human race do not, perhaps, present any spectacle more odious than the funeral piles of these men—particularly the latter. The most eloquent commentary would be unequal to the simple facts, which may be thus summed up:—An assembly of priests cast a man into the flames for having refused to subscribe to the condemnation of his master and friend!

CHAPTER XXIV.

What became of the Hussites after Huss—Wenceslaus—Ziska—The council send an inquisitor armed with a terrific decree accompanied by a bull from the new pope—The inquisitor driven out—Death of the king—Character of Ziska—Bohemia divided into parties—Calixtines and Taborites—Sigismund enters Bohemia at the head of a powerful army—Is driven out—A regency appointed—Council of Basil—Bohemia finally enslaved—The United Brethren.

It remains to show what fruits the doctrines of John Huss bore; to tell what became of his disciples after their master's death; and what the Hussites did after John Huss.

Shortly before the troubles which agitated Bohemia, the most illustrious of the sovereigns of that kingdom, the emperor Charles IV., visiting one day the citadel of Prague, approached a window, and as he looked forth his eyes filled with tears. His courtiers having asked him the reason, he replied: "I weep because my sons will be the enemies of my kingdom. I foresee that one of them will ruin the city; and if I knew which, I would kill him with my own hands."

Subsequent events confirmed this saying. Wenceslaus and Sigismund were born for the misfortune of Bohemia; and the better of the

two proved the more fatal to it. Sigismund was naturally of a cruel temperament. The salutary discipline of severe trials had modified his disposition, but at times it broke out with violence. When the news of the agitations of Bohemia reached him, he threw oil on the fire by writing several angry letters. Then came the news of Jerome's death to increase the irritation. The churches resounded with lamentations—a solemn fast day was consecrated to the martyrs—medals were struck with their effigy, and the people wept over their memory.

During this state of things came twenty-four articles, fulminated by the council against the followers of Huss. They struck, at the same time, the citizens of all orders in the kingdom —the university, by annulling its decrees—the Hussite clergy, by citing the principal members to Rome—the nobles of the kingdom, by ordering the restitution of all the ecclesiastical property—and the mass of the people, by commanding them to abjure *individually* the doctrines of Wiclif and Huss. Then there burst forth through all Bohemia a cry of horror.

Wenceslaus, the man on whom it devolved to determine on some decided course, was the very man who evinced the greatest want of resolution. Wholly given up to vices of every

kind, he seemed incapable of a noble or vigorous resolution. Through motives wholly selfish, he had sometimes favored and sometimes opposed the reformers. Afraid of his brother the emperor, alarmed at the prospect of a popular commotion, unwilling that the church should prevail against the reformers, because he would be obliged to give up to the clergy the property he had confiscated; and angry at the council for the death of John Huss, and the insults it had offered him, he left matters to take their course, determined to be guided by events.

Wenceslaus had at this time among his chamberlains a gentleman of good birth, named John de Trocznow, who had signalized himself in war when very young. He had obtained the name of *Ziska*,* from having lost an eye in battle; and under this name he became a terror to a part of Europe. He had a sister who had been dishonored by a monk. This circumstance redoubled his horror of the Romish clergy, and inspired him with a furious hatred against their whole order. The death of John Huss, whom he loved and revered, affected him profoundly. Walking one day in the court of the palace, lost in thought, the king saw him, and asked the subject of his reflections. "I

* *Ziska* means, in Bohemia, one *eyed*.

was thinking," replied Ziska, "of the dreadful affront which has been offered to the kingdom by the treatment inflicted on John Huss and Jerome."

"Neither you nor I," rejoined Wenceslaus, "are in a position to avenge them. If, however, you are aware of any means of accomplishing it, take courage and avenge your Bohemians."

However, Wenceslaus trembled, and awaited the crisis; concealing himself in one of his castles outside of Prague. The nobles meantime assembled, and sent a deputation to the king, inviting him to conjure away the storm, by his presence in the capital. They advised him to give the Hussites the churches which they had need of, and to act with rigor against the robbers, who infested the city and surrounding country. They chose for chief of the deputation, Nicholas of Hussinetz, lord of the village where Huss was born—his faithful friend and disciple.

The king promised to attend to certain demands made by the deputies, taking care to warn Hussinetz that he was spinning a cord with which to hang himself.

He proceeded to Prague, and manifested a desire to give the Hussites the churches demand-

ed, but hesitated because they asked for them with menaces. "Let them come to the palace," said he, "and bringing their arms, lay them down in my presence."

The chiefs deliberated, and were uncertain how to act. "How silly you are!" said one of them. "I have lived at court, and I know our king. Appear before him clad in your warlike attire and with your arms, and be satisfied he will leave them to you." The man that spoke thus was John Ziska. His advice was followed. Led on by Ziska, the Hussites appeared before the king in this formidable array. "Very illustrious and most excellent prince," said Ziska, "behold us here in obedience to your orders. Point out to us your enemies, and we will fight to our last breath for your life and your glory." "Thou hast spoken well," replied the king, "but return, and take with thee thy companions."

By this intrepid conduct, Ziska won the hearts and confidence of the Bohemians. The indolent king remained inactive; the nobles preserved an irritated silence; and the multitude waited for some time a prey to gloomy indignation.

Such was the state of things in Bohemia up to the arrival of Cardinal Jean Domimque, le-

gate of Martin V., the newly elected pope. This man brought with him the following decree of the council :—

"The clergy of Bohemia shall be re-established in their churches and property—the principal disciples of Huss (pointed out by name) shall be cited to appear before the court of Rome. All the condemned works of John Huss, Wiclif, and Jacobel, shall be delivered up to the legate. All the practices relative to divine worship, images, and the veneration of relics, shall be enforced. Whoever, whether priest or layman, shall defend the heresies, or render to John Huss or Jerome the worship paid to the saints, shall be treated as a relapsed heretic, and burned to death. Every secular, when duly warned, shall be bound to lend assistance in the execution of this decree, or shall be punished as an abettor of heresy."

This terrific decree, framed with the express intention of crushing all liberty of conscience, was accompanied by a bull from the pope, if possible more oppressive still. It ordered suspected persons to be interrogated under oath, and forced to reply whether they held *any* of the *forty-five articles* condemned from Wiclif's writings; or *any* of the doctrines contained in the *thirty articles attributed to Huss*. To these

seventy-five questions the pope added *thirty-nine*, of which a few are given below.

Every suspected person was to be asked,—

If he was not acquainted with Wiclif, John Huss, or Jerome, during their lifetime? and if he had not been on terms of friendship with them?

If he had not prayed for them after their death?

If he had not some of their books in his possession? or *knew of any persons* that possessed them? in which case he was bound to expose them.

If he believed *all* which the sacred council of Constance—representing the universal church—had approved of, in all points belonging to the faith and the salvation of souls, ought to be accepted and observed by *all Christians?* and that *all* that the council condemned ought to be held as justly and properly condemned?

If he believed the sentences passed upon *Wiclif*, *John Huss*, and *Jerome of Prague*, were according to *right* and *justice?*

If he believed that, after the consecrations of the bread and wine, the true flesh of Jesus Christ—*his blood, his soul, and his divinity*—Christ altogether, and the same body, were found both in the bread and in the cup?

If he believed, that in case of obstinate disobedience, the prelates had the power to issue an *interdict?* [that is, to forbid the public worship of God, baptism, marriage, and the burial of the dead!] to invoke the aid of the *secular power?* and to insist on the execution of their sentences?

If he believed, that to deprive a priest of vicious life of his property, was *sacrilege?*

This bull placed *every man* who doubted the *infallibility* of the council, or who believed the Holy Scriptures to be the rule of faith, or who entertained the opinions of John Huss, between *perjury* and *death.*

The inquisitor who had come as a messenger of wrath to crush the spirit of a whole people, to drag out their *secret thoughts*, and to burn them for having a conscience, was loaded with maledictions and insults, and pursued with cries of death. In the utmost dismay he fled to the emperor, calling for fire and sword against Bohemia, which he declared was in insurrection. Then it was that the people—many of whom had imbibed the sentiments of John Huss concerning liberty of conscience, but only a few of whom had learned, like him, when "smitten on the one cheek, to turn the other also"—rose in their might. Their anger burst forth

on all sides; and the avenger, the man of blood —the lion-hearted Ziska—drew his sword, and never again returned it to its scabbard.

Seldom has a man united in his own person, to a greater degree, all the qualities requisite for the leader of an army, and the head of a party. Genius for conceiving a plan; promptitude in executing it; art in gaining ascendency over men's minds, by popular resolutions and sudden and decisive movements; and power of retaining the ascendency gained, all united in this extraordinary man. Bohemia was just then, among other things, demanding the *cup*, as well as the bread, in the sacrament. Rome denied the claim; and just then, this had become a popular question. Ziska exhibits a sacramental cup to his army, and says, "Behold your standard!" He has no troops but infantry; suddenly he surprises and carries off a thousand horses from the emperor, and is at once supplied with cavalry. He has no fortresses; he ascends a lofty mountain with his soldiers. "Do you want houses?" says he, "dress your tents here, and let this camp be speedily converted into a town." Such was his fortress; and thus was founded the far-famed and impregnable TABOR. In his proclamations and letters he appeared as Crom-

well did after him, a warrior, using the glowing language of the Bible, whom nothing could stop, and who provided for every emergency. He called on the preachers to encourage the people to war against antichrist.

The popular tide, directed by such a man, bore down all before it. Bohemia, from one extremity to the other, became one great battle field. Wo to the town or castle, and, above all, the monastery, that closed its gates!—all passed by the edge of the sword. The sight of a monk, or a Romish priest, filled Ziska with gloomy rage—they recalled to his memory the image of his sister outraged, and his friend Huss at the funeral stake. He smote, burned, and exterminated; coldly glutting his vengeance in the shock of combatants, the gleam of flames, the shriek of victims; "punishing," as Balbinus expresses it, "*one sacrilege by a thousand.*"

Bohemia, Germany, Europe, were soon filled with the name of this terrible man. Wenceslaus awoke from his shameful slumber at the noise of his falling palaces, his churches in ashes, his senate massacred—he started up in a frightful fit of passion, which was injurious to himself alone; for his fury suffocated him: and this king, who had lived like a brute, died like a roaring lion.

Bohemia was already divided into parties; *religious interests* had become *subordinate* to *political ones;* and these divisions became more profound after the death of Wenceslaus. The three principal parties were, the Romanists, the Calixtines, and the Taborites. The Romanists had lost all their influence; the most zealous remained quiet, and waited, while others joined the Calixtines, and made common cause with them. The latter were called *limping Hussites* by those who went further than they in reforms.

The *Taborites* were so called, because they composed the greater part of the army which founded the city of Tabor; and remained sole masters of that place to the end of the war. A portion of the Taborites embraced doctrines substantially the same as those of the Waldenses. They owned no rule of faith but the Scriptures; and rejected images, relics, legends, tithes, invocations of saints, clerical celibacy, indulgences, purgatory, &c., &c. The common name of Hussites was given without distinction to the Calixtines and Taborites. Though often contending with each other, they made common cause against foreign invaders; and for twenty years were generally victorious.

A part of the Taborites were guilty of great excesses; and, indeed, what else could be ex-

pected when the excesses and violence of the priesthood had called forth a terrible reaction? and when civil and foreign war kept up in men's minds a burning effervescence? Many, however, lived an exemplary life; and were not distinguished from the Waldenses, either in doctrine or mode of living. These were the true disciples of John Huss—they carried out his doctrines to their legitimate consequences, and imitated him in sincerity and piety.

After the death of Wenceslaus, the nobility generally inclined to Sigismund as his successor; but they insisted on religious liberty as a condition of conferring upon him the crown. He rejected all terms, declaring he should make no conditions with heresy.

The Taborites, with Ziska at their head, were opposed to choosing any king, and demanded a republic. Many proposed to confer the crown on Nicholas of Hussinetz, who still enjoyed great credit among the Hussites, and remained their nominal chief until his death.

The emperor was at first diverted from the war against the Hussites by an irruption of the Turks into Hungary. But at last the storm burst. Pope Martin V. ordered a crusade to be preached against Bohemia; and a powerful army, from various parts of Germany, marched

toward Prague. Sigismund determined that terror should herald his approach. He gave way to his instincts of cruelty; and punished a sedition at Breslau with frightful executions. Among the victims was a disciple of John Huss, named John Crassa. For no other crime than honoring his master, and blaming those who put him to death, he was quartered alive. At the news of these executions, Prague, before divided, united, and rose in arms. Sigismund penetrated Bohemia; violated the tombs of kings; the catapults were charged with the pavement of churches and the marble of the altars. In some places, putrid corpses were flung by pieces into the besieged towns, to add pestilence to famine. Everywhere the conquered were massacred by the victors, to whichever party they belonged. Pressed on all sides, and his army surrounded by the Bohemians, Sigismund was forced to quit the country as a fugitive, which he had come to punish as a master.

At the head of a new army, levied in Hungary and Moravia, he returned. Sigismund, from the top of a hill, cast a look of contempt upon the Hussite army; many of whom were armed with long flails, loaded with iron. "I want to come to blows with those flail bearers,"

said he. "Sire," rejoined a nobleman from Moravia, "I fear that we shall all perish; those iron flails are exceedingly formidable." "O, you Moravians, I know you," said Sigismund; "you are afraid." "You shall find, sire, that we are not afraid," said the nobleman. "Behold us ready to obey your orders; and we shall go where your majesty will not venture." The chiefs flung themselves from their horses, the troops followed their leaders, and the imperial army precipitated itself upon the intrenchments of the Taborites. The defenders of Prague sallied forth; and the besiegers fell by thousands under those iron flails which the emperor had so much despised. Many of the Moravian nobility remained on the field of battle; but the emperor was hurried away by the route of his troops.

Ziska, however, had received a wound, which would have arrested any other man in his sanguinary career; for an arrow, at the siege of Roby, had deprived him of his only eye. But in becoming blind, he became still more terrible —his wound was a fresh stimulus to his rage and to his genius; and revealed in him faculties really almost incredible. His memory was prodigious. Bohemia, with her waters, woods, valleys, and plains, was now as present to his

thought as the reality had ever been to his sight. A spirit of fire in a body of iron, his activity spurned at fatigue, and became exasperated by rest. "All seasons and weather are alike to this blind man," his soldiers used to say; "he goes by night as by day." Wherever there was fighting to do, he hurried to the spot, as if urged to the work by an exterminating spirit. In this way he overcame the various factions; several times delivered Prague and Bohemia; and put to flight all the armies of the empire.

The diet of Czaslan opened in July, 1421. All the states of Bohemia, and of the marquisate of Moravia, had sent their representatives. They appointed a regency of twenty members; and Ziska appeared in the front rank of the nobles. They solemnly deposed Sigismund; and swore to maintain their liberty.

The emperor, tamed by his reverses, once more changed the style of his address. He wrote to the diet to justify himself, and promised every reasonable concession.

The diet returned a haughty answer. "Very illustrious prince and king," say they, "since your majesty assures that if you have caused any disorder to the kingdom of Bohemia, you are inclined to afford a remedy; these are our grievances. You have permitted Master John

Huss to be burned, afer giving him a safe-conduct; which is a very great affront to the people of Bohemia. Liberty was given to all who departed from the Catholic doctrine, to explain themselves freely before the council of Constance, except our illustrious citizens: and to add to the contempt evinced toward Bohemia, you have suffered Master Jerome, whose merit was so great, to be in like manner put to death. You have also permitted, in the council, the kingdom of Bohemia to be devoted to extermination. You have excited the neighboring nations to destroy us as accursed heretics. The foreign princes, whom you have drawn into our country, have ravaged it with fire and sword—sparing nothing, either profane or sacred, and inflicting on our wives and daughters the most cruel outrages. . . . Put an end to the invasions of the neighboring nations—restore what you have taken away or misapplied—swear to maintain the four articles, [of religious liberty,] and preserve to the kingdom of Bohemia and the marquisate of Moravia their institutions and their privileges." The emperor returned an evasive reply to these demands.

In the mean time civil dissensions revived, and blood continued to flow. Another crusade was preached; and another army raised and

marched against Bohemia: it shared the fate of the others.

After many years of terrific conflict, a second general council met at Basil. Bohemia was invited to send her deputation for the settlement of difficulties. They came, and were heard in several public and private conferences. The deputies contented themselves with maintaining their four famous articles, by the eloquent mouth of John de Rockizane. These four articles were: the free preaching of the gospel—the punishment of public offenses without privilege to the clergy—the secular administration of the property of the church—and communion in both kinds. The council finally admitted the first three; but interpreted and modified them in such a way as to render them nearly nugatory. As to the fourth, it granted, for a time, the Bohemian clergy to administer the communion in both kinds.

These concessions satisfied the peace party, who after some further struggles gained the day. The articles were afterward violated, and Bohemia, which had so long struggled for liberty of conscience, became again enslaved. But from the purest remains of the vanquished several churches were formed, which took the name of *The United Brethren.*

CHAPTER XXV.

The United Brethren—Persecuted by Podiebrad and the Romanists—Disasters of Bohemia—Synod of the United Brethren — Comenius and his flock emigrate — Affecting adieu—The United Brethren form an establishment at Hernhutt—Renewed intercourse with Bohemia—Their character and missions.

OUR present and concluding chapter will show that the flames did not consume, nor the torrents of blood which flowed in Bohemia drown, the doctrines or the influence of John Huss. His mantle fell upon a portion of his disciples; and his meek and gentle spirit descended as a heavenly legacy to a little company of true believers. Distinguished among all other sects by the purity of their morals, and by their simple and pious lives, the *United Brethren* beheld themselves the objects of the hatred of both the Romanists and the Calixtines. But the only arms which they opposed to their enemies were resignation, faith, and hope.

Near the conclusion of the terrific struggle, at which we have glanced in the preceding chapters, George de Podiebrad, an energetic noble of Bohemia, and a zealous Calixtine, had been chosen king. His religion was altogether subservient to his policy, and thinking to ap-

pease the pope and the Romanists, he determined in concert with Rockizane, the Calixtine archbishop of Prague, to sacrifice the United Brethren. He ordered a cruel persecution against them. But this culpable sacrifice did not save himself: the persecutor was in his turn persecuted. In maintaining the privileges of the Calixtines, he drew on himself the anger of the pope. This pontiff, Pius II., again lit up the civil war in Bohemia. He shamefully violated the treaty made between the Romanists and Calixtines, under the pretence that no pope had signed it, and excited the former against the latter. His successor, Paul II., went further; and published a crusade against Bohemia and its king. Podiebrad was excommunicated and died dethroned; and the unfortunate kingdom was again covered with blood and ruins. He left to his successor—Wladislaus, son of the king of Poland—a mutilated crown, and all the wrath of Rome. The reigns of Wladislaus and his son Louis were the last moments of the political and religious independence of Bohemia. The princess Anne, sister of King Louis, heiress of the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary, married Ferdinand of Austria, grandson of the emperor Maximilian; and thenceforward Bohemia formed part of the Austrian states. Since then this

unhappy country scarcely reckons in the history of Europe, but by its misfortunes.

But fire and sword had not been able to extirpate the doctrines condemned at Rome. The Calixtines formed a considerable portion of the population; and at the conclusion of the fourteenth century, the United Brethren reckoned about two hundred churches in Bohemia and Moravia. This latter community always evinced a fervent desire to unite with all Christians who recognized the revealed Word as their supreme law. Twice they sent some of their people to seek throughout the different countries of Europe a people whose opinions were like their own. Their delegations found, with the exception of a small number of Waldenses, only a few isolated believers, several of whom perished in the flames before their eyes. The Brethren then waited with resignation until God should come to the succor of his church; and in a memorable synod, which they held in 1489, they decided, *that if God should anywhere raise up faithful doctors and reformers of the church, they would make common cause with them.* When at last Luther arose, a century after the death of John Huss, the Bohemians remembered the words pronounced by the glorious martyr in presence of his judges and his executioners:—

"*In one hundred years you shall answer before God and before me.*"

The spirit of civil and religious freedom had risen in Germany. Nine Protestant princes and eleven free cities had formed in 1531 a union for the mutual defense of their religious faith and civil independence, called the *Smalkaldic League*. Ferdinand called on the Bohemians, who had shed so much blood for freedom, to assist in crushing it among their neighbors. They refused, and joined the league. But their enemies again triumphed in the battle of Muhlberg; and a *tribunal of blood* renewed against them the atrocities decreed against their fathers at Constance.

Once more, in 1619, they allied themselves with liberty: but the great battle fought in 1620, in the White Mountain, delivered up the Bohemians, without a chance of deliverance, to their enemies. A new tribunal of blood was established, and its decrees made victims on every hand. Ferdinand II. boasted that he had brought back Bohemia pacified and united again to the Church of Rome. That church had, indeed, triumphed; but at what a price! History hardly furnishes a parallel instance of such a complete triumph of brute force over the free spirit of a people. *More than thirty*

thousand families were proscribed, and obliged to become Romanists or leave their country. They chose to preserve their faith, which they held more dear than the homes of their childhood. The property of *seven hundred and twenty-eight* wealthy lords and knights was confiscated. The number of cities was diminished *by one half;* and from a population of *three millions*, only *one million* remained in its ruined towns and devastated districts. An execrable description of glory to the victors, which renders applicable the terrible description of the great historian of ancient Rome: *They make and desert, and they call it peace.*

Still in the mountain and forest villages, out of the way of the Jesuits and soldiers, many secret believers remained. But these reformers, and particularly the United Brethren, lived under the severest oppressions. One of their pastors, Comenius, thus bewailed his afflicted church:—"Alas, what remains to this poor people, who, for having faithfully followed the doctrine of the apostles, and the example of the primitive church, find themselves persecuted and abandoned. There only remains to them the aid of the God of mercy. They are reduced to exclaim like the prophet of old, 'I called on my friends, but they did not listen to me.' O

eternal God! regard and consider our disgrace; we are become like orphans. We have suffered persecution, we have labored, and we had no rest. Our feasts are changed into mourning. O Eternal! wouldst thou forget us for ever?"

The reformers of this country were abandoned by those for whom they had opened the way. They reaped no advantage from the treaties which, after thirty years of war, secured to the reformers of Germany liberty of conscience, and freedom of religious worship.

Comenius retired with a part of his flock to Poland. When about quitting his country for ever, he stopped on a high mountain whence his eyes could take in Bohemia and Moravia. There, with his brethren, he fell on his knees, and with tears and sobs he cried, "O God, abandon not this country—deprive it not of thy Word; and preserve in it always a holy seed." His prayer was granted; for the pure worship of the gospel did not entirely disappear from these countries. The churches of the Brethren were fallen; but God had there in pious hearts his living temples. A revival of evangelical faith took place in the beginning of the eighteenth century; and from that period dates a new era in the history of the United Brethren. Touching relations were renewed between the

descendants of the ancient emigrants at liberty in a foreign country, and these disciples in Bohemia. New emigrations took place. Several poor families were kindly received in Upper Lusatia by a pious and charitable man—Count Zinzendorf. They found a profitable refuge in his domains; and there they founded the town of Hernhutt, and there was founded the principal establishment of a most respectable branch of the great Christian family. This society, which has become eminent for its zeal, self-denial, perseverance, and success in the cause of missions, is in our day generally known by the name of MORAVIANS, or UNITED BRETHREN.

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